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ABSTRACT

The first of two papers on language history broadly defines historical linguistics and considers the activities of the descriptive linguist, who classifies the features of a language; the comparative linguist, who relates languages to one another; and the historical linguist, who is interested in the changes, completed and anticipated, of a living language. Six basic generalizations about change which have been formulated by historical linguists are listed. The second paper focuses upon imaginatively teaching historical linguistics to enable the high school student to understand and appreciate both the vitality and the continuous change of his language. These two major ingredients of linguistic history are illustrated with plans for short classroom discussions on four aspects of linguistic change: error, intentional innovations, semantic change, and the linguistic impact of history. At the end of each article is a short annotated bibliography. [Not available in hard copy due to marginal legibility of document.] (JMC)

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History: the Life in Language

By Louis A. Muinzer

FOREWORD

To some English teachers, historical linguistics is as dead as the 1936 presidential election, the interurban car and the mustache cup. To others, it is as pregnant with horrors as Druids dancing in the moonlight or the Black Mass. To still others, it is simply a dull brute nourished on Gothic verbs, Old English weak adjectives and other irrelevancies. In spite of these varied responses, however, most would agree that not even a Bedlamite in the last throes of paranoia would unleash historical linguistics in a classroom teeming with clean-limbed American youth. In a pair of papers, I wish to submit a minority report on this dead, dire, dull irrelevancy, and to suggest that the lively discipline of historical linguistics belongs in every high school and college classroom where English is taught. The aura of fear and mystery which so often surrounds this subject in the academic mind is due to three basic causes: 1) a misunderstanding of underlying purposes of linguistic history; 2) a lack of familiarity with the non-technical presentations of language history and with the historical reference works; and 3) an imperfect awareness of the value of historical procedures in the English classroom. Behind this trio of causes lies our failure to grant to historical

The intricacies and complexities of historical English grammar and Anglo Saxon have been a challenge (and vexation) to many of us. This paper by Dr. Muinzer, Assistant Professor of English at the University of Illinois, makes it possible for us to place historical linguistics in the secondary curriculum where it belongs and thereby enrich our teaching of English. This research is a refreshing masterpiece of scholarship. The latter part of this Bulletin is a subsequent paper in which Dr. Muinzer gives the implications of principles clarified here.

linguistics its proper place in the curriculum of teacher-training. If the following brief presentation of the subject does nothing more than suggest the seriousness of the gap in our program for prospective teachers, then it will have served a worthwhile purpose.

This paper deals with the first of the three causes of misunderstanding by attempting to define historical linguistics in terms of the general field of linguistic study and then to set forth some of the basic historical principles. To assist in the removal of the second stumbling block, a selective bibliography of helpful and relatively non-technical discussions and reference books has been placed at the end of the discussion. Throughout, I have drawn my illustrative material almost exclusively from the English language, but a chronological portrait of our mother tongue lies beyond the limits of my chosen subject. However, those who wish to have such a sketch in hand as they read these pages may profitably use the admirable digest of English linguistic history found in the introduction to the Merriam-Webster Unabridged Dictionary. Fuller presentations are listed in the bibliography.

In the next paper, I hope to describe certain projects in historical linguistics which may provide practical applications of the following material in the high school and college classroom. The use of such projects, of course, depends upon a clear understanding of the underlying principles discussed here.

The Nature and Purpose of Language History

The simple term "linguistics" or "language study" covers a larger area of study than any given textbook or monograph can possibly suggest. When we consider that language is 1) a method of communication, 2) a compendium of sounds and sound combinations, 3) a human invention, and 4) a social activity, we can begin to appreciate how many valid approaches there are to language, and how many individual linguistic facets invite special examination. Before we consider that special kind of language study based upon the historical approach, let us note briefly the various areas into which anyone who calls himself a linguist may delve. The following topics by no means exhaust the study possibilities of the linguist, but they do suggest the range of his legitimate activities.

Working from the simplest to the most complex topics, we may arrange the study areas of linguistics in the following order:

1. *The study of language sounds,* the smallest of our linguistic units. *(Phonology)*
2. *The study of spellings. (Orthography)*

3. ***The study of punctuation.***
4. ***The study of words,*** which may be approached in a number of ways: their meanings may be studied *(Semantics)*; their inflectional forms may be analyzed *(Morphology)*; they may be collected, arranged and defined (*Lexicography*). Several inherently historical approaches to words will be added to these later in the paper.
5. ***The study of word relationships. (Syntax)***
6. ***The study of speech groups within a language.*** A dialect, the speech of a special group, may fall into one of two general classes: it may be a *Regional Dialect* (a dialect which arises in a particular geographical area) or a *Social Dialect* (one which arises in a cultural and occupational circle).
7. ***The study of usage.*** That social dialect which is generally considered the "standard" of effective communication may be the subject of special analysis. The student of usage attempts to understand the norms of standard expression and to act as a linguistic judge in matters of dispute.
8. ***The study of language as an instrument of expression.*** This area may be broken down into the study of *Rhetoric* (the study of the techniques of effective writing and speaking) and the practice of *Literary Criticism* (the analysis of literature, that variety of art composed of linguistic materials).
9. ***The study of language in relation to society.*** Such an approach interprets language as a social phenomenon and as an institution molded by and molding civilization.
10. ***The study of language in relation to the individual.*** Such study attempts to explore the psychological basis of language. This, the newest of the linguistic specialties, is called *Psycholinguistics.*

In the outline above, I have interpreted linguistics in the broadest possible sense of that term. I have done so because I strenuously object to the conception of linguistic science as a limited discipline involving a few basic lines of study like phonology and morphology. The individual may specialize in some particular area of linguistics, but he should never close his eyes to the value and inherent significance of other types of language study. In fact the student who wishes to understand language as a organism must approach it as a vital activity of man, one intimately linked with the personality which gives it birth and with the society in which it is used. A given linguistic investigation, then, may be limited in scope, but the investigator cannot afford to limit his perspective: behind the most minute of specialized studies must lie a response to the immensity of language.

The vast, hydra-headed discipline of linguistics may be validly approached, however, from any one of three directions. Depending upon his choice of direction, the general linguist transforms him-

self into a descriptive, comparative, or historical specialist. For the sake of convenience, we may explore these three specialties by examining in some detail the aims and varied activities of their practitioners.

1. *The Descriptive Linguist* attempts to record and then to classify the features of a language at a given time. Ideally, he may range over the ten kinds of study listed above and compile a complete description of the language, but generally he is more of a specialist. He may concentrate upon morphology and syntax, and produce a descriptive grammar. He may work in the field of lexicography and compile a "collegiate" dictionary. If he is of a more practical nature, he may arrange difficult spellings into useful categories and publish a spelling book for school children. He may take a tape recorder into a boarding house and record the speech of the inmates for phonological analysis.[1] He may collect dialect data in an isolated mountain region or in a certain block in Brooklyn; the data he gathers may be published as a monograph or contributed to a dialect atlas. Or he may even attempt to relate the language of his or some other era to the multifarious activities of its contemporary society. Whatever his activities may be, however, the descriptive linguist is concerned with language at a point in time. His work is like a skillfully taken snapshot, for he has captured a body of linguistic data at a given moment and in a sense "immortalized" it.

2. *The Comparative Linguist* relates languages to one another. Thanks to his brilliant work, we can today understand the family relationship which binds together such vastly different languages as English, Russian and Sanskrit. Generally, a linguist of this type is primarily concerned with phonology, morphology and syntax, but his work does take other interesting forms as well. To the comparative lexicographer we owe our bilingual dictionaries like those for French and English and for Greek and German. The importance of the competent comparative linguist is painfully brought home to the student of English, who realizes that many shortcomings in our conventional grammars are due to pseudo-comparative analysis by erstwhile linguists in the past: because of such muddled work, Latin grammar has been violently forced upon the grammar of English, a vastly different language with its own personal characteristics. The contemporary comparative linguist, conscious of distinguishing differences as well as significant similarities, has provided us with a vast body of valuable scholarship. If the descriptive linguist takes a photograph of a language,

the comparative linguist takes photographs of two or more languages, places the pictures side-by-side, and analyzes their salient features.

3. *The Historical Linguist* is easily characterized now: instead of snapshots, he takes movies. His curiosity is directed not at what a language *is* at a given time, but rather at what *made* it what it is. He is a student of development and continuity in language, however, not of the past *per se;* thus he is something of a prophet, something of an amateur visionary: one of his greatest sources of delight is the unfolding of a new linguistic event which allows him a glimpse of the future. For him, the key word in the vocabulary of language study is a simple French loanword: *Change.* A static description of a language at a single moment of time fails to satisfy him, so he puts together a great many "times" (the frames of his movie film strip), and establishes patterns of motion. He may focus his camera on any aspect of language. He may work out the history of sounds or inflections or word meanings. Turning to lexicography he may produce his own kind of dictionary based on historical principles, tracing forms and meanings from the remote past to the present.[2] He may chronicle the rise and fall of a regional dialect, or record the impact of a caravan of wars, invasions, reforms, conversions, and inventions upon a language. In a humbler mood, he may simply write the saga of the comma, or trace the spellings of a word.

In the course of his particular researches, the historical linguist adds to the preceding list a few linguistic study areas of his own. To the study of words (No. 4), he adds the study of *Etymology* or word derivation, the tracing of words to their original components, roots and affixes. Also under the heading of word study falls the historical linguist's investigations of vocabulary sources, which involves the cataloging of *Loanwords,* borrowings from foreign languages.[3] The language historian must ferret these out in the source materials of the various eras, identify their linguistic origin as closely as possible, and date them. Often, a cluster of loanwords from a given language at a given time reveals vividly the effects of a social upheaval or the advent of the "latest" fad; such considerations take the study of loanwords into the sphere of sociolinguistics (No. 9). Another historical specialty, the study of *Place-Names,* is definitely social in bias; at first thought, names like *Wessex, Thames,* and *Madison Avenue* would seem best approached simply as words of a special kind. As studied by specialists in the field, however, place-names are primarily a record of settle-

ment and exodus, and of the coming together of alien peoples. It does not seem too much to say that the study of place-names represents the most fruitful of all the unions of linguistic and social history.[4] In a similar fashion, the investigation of *Personal Names* can also yield up the secrets of society.[5]

To understand the principles of historical linguistics, however, one must not become too closely involved with the special areas of study: the centrally important fact of this approach to language is the contemplation of change. In the course of such contemplation, the language historian is able to formulate a series of basic generalizations about change which aid him in his more specific research activities. The most important of these generalizations are the following:

1. *Change is a fundamental characteristic of a living language.* A given language can attain a permanent, static form only when it ceases to be written and/or spoken, when it becomes a "dead language." The words dead language will cause many readers to think instantly of Latin, which is frequently described by this phrase. Actually, however, Latin affords an example of a living and hence changing language. Historically speaking, Latin is merely the early form of the Romance Languages (French, Italian, Spanish and Rumanian)[6] which have developed from the venerable language of the Romans. Furthermore, Latin proper was the international medium of communication throughout the Middle Ages; as such, it displayed many signs of life: syntax was simplified in the prose, for example, and countless words came into the language or altered in meaning. A simple glance at the lexicographical works specifically dealing with Medieval Latin will dispel the common notion that the language was a mere fossil after the days of Roman glory. It cannot even be said that the noble old tongue has stopped wagging and developing in 1960. An investigation of "college diploma Latin" and "commencement exercise oration Latin" would probably discover that the Classics professors who write (or ghost write) most of these dignified texts have hoed the Ciceronian row; in such work, Latin is virtually a corpse, and no one will deny it. The true source of living Latin in our century is the Roman Catholic Church, which still employs Latin as a convenient means of communication. In Catholic Latin prose, the old language of Augustus is as frisky as a spring colt and as changeable as the weather. Virgil would not know what to call the complex instrument upon which I am writing this sentence, but contemporary Latin, with the flexibility of any vital language, refers to the

typographica machina without a moment's hesitation; to create this expression for *typewriter,* modern Latin used a word coined from Greek elements in the Middle Ages (*typographia*) and combined it with the Classical *machina,* which is just about all an ancient Roman would understand if he were to hear the expression. To him a *via ferrea* ("railroad, road of iron") would be a complete mystery, and the *currus* would seem an unlikely object to find on such an implausible highway; he would not know, of course, that *currus* can refer to a railway car as well as to his familiar chariot.[7] I have used these Latin examples to demonstrate that if people give a language even the most restricted form of life it will change. In fact, it not only will but actually *must* change, if it is to be a means of communication. Individuals change, societies change, time moves on. Language, through intent or accident, moves along with man, society and time. Eleven centuries ago, an Old Englishman translated a timeless passage of poetry:

> Weotudlice ond thaeh the ic gonge in midle scuan deathes, ne ondredu ic yfel, forthon thu mid me erth; gerd thin ond cryc thin hie me froefrende werun.

The thought was eternal, and the imagery universal, but the language was alive and existed in time. Men spoke that language through a series of wars, social changes, and strange events; six hundred years later, another Englishman sat down to translate the same poem of consolation and the changed, ever-changing words were waiting to be used:

> For gif that ich haue gon amiddes of the shadowe of deth, y shal nought douten iuels, for thou are wyth me; thy discipline and thyn amendying conforted me.[8]

The world of that fourteenth century writer gave way to the chaos of the fifteenth century and the violent glories of the Renaissance. Another Englishman, taking up the same text, rendered it in a language which seems to defy time, but which nevertheless spoke to changing man:

> Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Linguistic change gave to each of these Englishmen an English of his own; an English suited to his time and molded to the contours of his personality. His language expressed *his* world and *his* thoughts, and the lilt in his voice as he spoke it was as much a part of him as the twinkle in his eye or his fear of the devil. It would be wrong, however, to view his language simply as an ex-

pression of his personality, for his English is a time-woven fabric of inspired creativity, accident, and occasional tomfoolery. The English language belongs to no one man, but at a given time a man will find himself reflected in it and it in turn will find itself reflected in the man.

Viewed from a research standpoint, linguistic change is, to be sure, a saddening business: it is a pity that the modern English speaker must struggle with vocabulary and grammar to read *Beowulf* in the English of the Old English era. It is a pity, too, that the English cultural historian finds his primary sources like the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* or the charters a far cry linguistically from Churchill's Memoirs or the Congressional Record. On the other hand such differences teach their own lesson, for they represent the cultural and psychological barriers which separate us from the past. The sentimentalist's view that we are "all brothers under the skin" does not hold true historically. Men, their attitudes, their responses, their social relationships *do* change and change radically. Differences in language, then, mirror the obstacles which we must overcome if we are to understand the civilizations of the past and find their timeless and universal meaning. In the later 17th and earlier 18th centuries, linguistic change oppressed the cultivated mind to such a degree that the proposal to "fix" English in an immutable form was seriously entertained. The well-intentioned proponents of such a scheme did not understand the futility of any project to destroy change.[9] Their spirit, however, lived on in the Rules of the prescriptive grammar codified by William Ward in 1765 and disseminated up to the present time.[10] The belief that there is an absolute Right Way to use the language implies that new developments—changes—are wrong. The social prestige of such English teaching has undoubtedly acted as a partial check on change, but it has by no means stopped it. We need only point to the development of the progressive passive (*the firewood is being cut*) in the late 18th Century[11] and the great flowering of merged verbs (*to put up with, to talk over the matter*) in our own time[12] to illustrate well the inevitable progress of linguistic change. The current, enlightened view of the English teacher as an interpreter of usage rather than as an iron fisted enforcer of the Rules has done much to relax the tension in cultivated English. Change, the very *life* of a language, moves relentlessly towards the future.

2. *Any and in fact all facets of language change.* As a language develops, change carries it forward on all fronts. Thus, the Old English word *deor* (pronounced roughly like *day-or*)[13] has changed

in sound and spelling to MnE *deer*: the meaning of the word has also changed, for the word meant "(wild) animal" in OE, not a specific kind of wild animal with antlers. Inflectionally, the possessive singular *deores* has become *deer's* and the form of the indirect object plural, *deorum,* has been lost entirely. Thus, a single word can exhibit four kinds of sound change: phonological, orthographic, semantic and morphological. If we further consider that the general meaning of OE *deor* is now conveyed by the loanwords *animal* (Latin) and *beast* (French),[14] our simple illustration leads us to consider still a fifth kind of change. It would be an easy matter to find changes in syntax (the increasing reliance upon word order), usage (prescriptive avoidance of the OE double negative), *et al.* No aspect of language is exempt from change, and none ever really stops changing, though the rate of development may vary from era to era. In the case of English, the ME period was a period of greatest development, with all facets of our language changing with remarkable rapidity.

In considering change, one must always remember that the various kinds of change neither depend upon one another nor necessarily progress at the same speed: Phonological Change, Morphological Change, Semantic Change lead independent lives. Notwithstanding the comments above, *deer* is a fairly conservative noun morphologically, for it retains its OE uninflected subject-object plural: we still say *the deer were crossing the road.*[15] The shift in the meaning of the word is thus more emphatic than change in form. On the other hand, the verb *help* has changed radically in form (from a strong verb to a weak one) but its OE meaning is still with us. Taking a broader view of these phenomona, we might observe that changes in vocabulary are occurring at a rapid clip while changes in our (highly inexact) spelling system plod sluggishly along.[16]

3. *Change in language begins with the linguistic activity of an individual* or with the activity of many individuals responding spontaneously to the same impulses. To begin the study of historical linguistics on the level of societies or epochs is to court misunderstanding. Change begins in the mind and mouth of the solitary human being. Sometimes we can identify a language innovator and write his biography if we so choose. We know, for instance, who created the words *physicist, chortle,* and *Kodak.*[17] Characteristically, though, the individual innovator is completely anonymous and we use our imaginations to keep his shadowy image before us. In the next section of this discussion we shall attempt to see precisely how

our old friend "Anon." goes about the business of reshaping language. At the moment, we need merely stress the fact that he does exist.

While "Anon." is a lone wolf linguistically speaking, he is at his potent best when other "Anon.'s" are making the same innovation simultaneously. If *chortle* is the creation of a single man, *geese,* the plural of *goose,* is apparently not. In the period before English was written, individuals presumably tended to make certain internal vowel changes when an *i* or *j* followed the root syllable. The sound changes involved in this procedure follow a certain "error pattern" and would result easily in the everyday speech of the early Angles and Saxons.[18] Clearly, there was no tribal meeting of the settlers of Britain at which *geese* was proclaimed the plural of *goose.* Individuals *working exclusively on their own* produced this form and similar plurals. After the mistake had been perpetrated independently by a great many people, more accurate speakers presumably accepted the new pronunciation and after a time an analogical pattern[19] became established: if *geese* is the plural of *goose,* then *teeth* must be the plural of *tooth.*[20]

A similar tendency to make spontaneous innovations is often encountered in MnE. Independently many individuals have said *Cavalry* when they intended to say *Calvary*[21] and many more have said *libary* for *library.*[22] Many a youngster has said *singed* instead of *sang, bringed* instead of *brought.*[23] Such people do not belong to a secret society: they blunder on their own like good rugged individualists. In sum, it would be humanly impossible for a group of people to meet and simultaneously make an innovation in the language. At such an improbable conclave, one person might make such an innovation and the others accept it or modify it, but no concerted linguistic effort could occur.[24] To understand how actual changes in speech come about, we must study the individual speaker or writer: in his words lie the potentialities of language development on even its grandest scale.

4. *The inauguration of change* by the individual may be stimulated by a number of forces.

a. *The desire to innovate.* A new word like *physicist* (See note 17) may be consciously *coined* or *borrowed* to fill a gap in the vocabulary. Such gaps are created by social innovations of many kinds: inventions (*airplane, flashlight, television*), religious conversions (*gospel, priest, Positive Thinking*), new fads and fashions (*bloomers, yo-yo*), military activity (*dive-bomber, cannon*). Whatever is new must have its name or it cannot be communi-

cated verbally. In the OE period, such words were characteristically coined from native word elements (e.g. *gospel,* above, and *Thrines* for the Blessed Trinity, "a Three-ness"); beginning in that period, however, the borrowing habit became increasingly important and in the ME and MnE, it has become a dominant feature of the language. A *chef* (French borrowing) is likely to borrow the word *fricassee* rather than create a new native term for the dish. The inventor will probably turn to foreign elements like those in *television* to name his new device, and the columnists will refer to it as *video.* Old native compound habits, however, are very much alive in the new words from OE or well assimilated borrowings: consider *sidecar, roadblock, bookbag, gift-wrapped, king size.* In addition to compounding and borrowing, people frequently create spanking new forms which are based on existing word materials (*chortle* from *chuckle* and *snort*) or represent new combinations of sounds (*Kodak*).

Not all conscious innovations, though, are utilitarian. In the course of their day-to-day use, words tend to become stale, and lose their vividness. Their users, thereupon become dissatisfied with them and make changes in their vocabulary. The slang of high school and college students offers countless examples of this tendency, but one case history may stand for them all. A student of mine, in an assignment on word changes, submitted the coined form *poke-slow*[25] with the following note: "At Girl Scout Camp, we industrious little campers coined this word. Several of us were continuously late and *slowpoke* didn't seem to carry enough disdain." An examination of a poem by a Gerard Manley Hopkins, or a Wallace Stevens will reward the searcher with many examples of such creative vitality. Poets—like Girl Scouts—desire emotional freshness in their language. Consequently they love to borrow from alien dialects and languages to twist the meaning of a word by placing it in a context and to coin a word which captures their inspiration: when a Stevens calls a man a *minuscule,* when a Hopkins writes of a *wimpled* lip, or (in a lighter vein) when a Lewis Carroll brandishes a *vorpal* blade, vitality triumphs over usefulness.[26]

The intentional linguistic innovation, alas, is not always an outgrowth of valuable human instincts. Coined terms are often the instruments of racial and religious prejudice, of snobbish group-identification, and of other mortal weaknesses. The only amusing type of innovation under this heading is essentially semantic and involves the pumping of taboo meanings into otherwise innocuous words and phrases. Such words (*Euphemisms*) often involve death

(*to pass away, to cash in one's chips*) and perfectly harmless bodily functions (*to go to the potty, Powder Room,* etc., *ad nauseum*).[27]

b. *The nature of sounds.* We here enter into a matter of great complexity, but at least a few words must be said about it. What we call a distinctive sound in a language is actually uttered in a slightly, non-distinctively different fashion by individual speakers.[28] Let us, for instance, take the vowel in *sweet.* In OE and ME, this vowel was pronounced almost like the *a* in the modern form *date.* This sound would vary a bit in the speech of individuals, but no one would either care or notice, because the word *sweet* was clearly understood. Suppose, however, that certain individuals independently tended to use a variety of the vowel which was produced a bit "higher" in the mouth. Suppose that this random peculiarity began to penetrate the ears of other people who began to make their own *e's* in the same way. Suppose that by inching its way along in this fashion the *e* eventually lost its *a* (as in *date*) pronunciation and emerged in the Renaissance as a *distinctly* different vowel. Actually there is no need to suppose, for we have now reached our modern pronunciation of the vowel in *sweet.* Other factors being agreeable, OE and ME long *e* regularly develops into the MnE sound which we have discussed. When we find such a wide-spread development, we are tempted to view that phenomenon as a "Law." It is my belief, however, that the random sound variations of *individual* speakers started a trend which spread throughout a speech community. Such a "regular" development, it must be noted, does not depend upon the influence of related sounds, but upon the latitude of vocal possibilities within the area which we think of as a language sound. Contrast with such a development that involved in the creation of *geese* as the plural of *goose*: in that case, a now-departed *i* influenced the sound of *o.*

Through the study of progressions like that of OE-ME long *e,* historical linguists have been able to work out sets of sound changes of immense significance. The long *e* development is part of a series of vowel changes which transformed the sound of English and added to our spelling difficulties, the orthography of the language being more conservative than our speech. This body of changes (called *The Great Vowel Shift*)[29] occurred during the Renaissance and was long in progress. Another set of regular changes had occurred at the "birth" of Primitive Germanic, the ancestor of English; in that case, certain consonants were involved in what are usually termed the *Grimm's Law* and *Verner's Law* developments.[30]

c. ***The personality of the language.*** The term is an exceptionally vague one, but the concept is important. There is, for example, a *drum beat* in English which has whittled away on our inflectional endings. For instance, the adjective *good* in an expression like "for the good king" had the early OE inflectional form *godum*; the stress on the basic syllable weakened the inflectional ending in later OE to *godan*; in ME this became (with respelling of the root vowel) *gooden*, then *goode*.[31] In MnE, the stress of the basic syllable has completely engulfed the inflection, leaving *good*. Another, much later "personality" trait is to be seen in the tendency of post-OE English to borrow a word from another language. Finally, the establishment of patterns to which the elements of a language tend to conform may be mentioned. In MnE, verbs tend to add *-ed* in the past tense and nouns tend to add *-(e)s* in the plural. When we create a new verb or noun, we do so in accord with these patterns. (*Faubused* from the proper noun *Faubus*.[32] *Runs* in a baseball game from *to run*).

d. ***The impact of external linguistic groups.*** Later, we shall consider the influence of one dialect on another. For the moment, let us consider how a foreign language can change the individual's speech, hence ultimately the speech of many people. The most obvious kind of linguistic attack occurs when one language makes a "general attack" on the forms, vocabulary, etc., of another. Such a situation develops when speakers of two languages mingle or live side-by-side. English has twice been thus besieged in its island fortress: first, by the Danish invaders of the OE period and by their Norman-French conquerors in the ME era.

When the Scandanavians settled down in that region called the Danelaw, their English neighbors heard many Norse words, some of them similar to their own. As individuals became familiar with these foreign words, they must have used them unselfconsciously in their own English speech. The Norse pronoun *they* must have appeared very frequently in the casual give-and-take of conversation, for it "caught on" and eventually became Standard English. *Skirt, gift* and *law* may represent the kinds of words absorbed by the English from their former enemies.

French, the language of William the Conqueror and his followers, had a similar impact upon English at a later date. Indeed, for sheer intensity, the French onslaught was more violent than that of the Norse; more than any other force, it is responsible for the borrowing habit (or disease) which characterizes the English we know. Yet one looks in vain among the thousands of French bor-

rowings for a single linguistic element as striking as the humble form word *they*. *Beef* and *cattle* and *hotels* are all very well but they speak less eloquently to the historian than our third person pronoun: how vigorously the Scandanavians must have *they-ed* their neighborin Angles to have made such a conquest!

Conquest, however, is not the only method of linguistic attack. Certain languages (rather illogically) gain general social prestige or special prestige in a certain sphere of activity. French still is on the attack in the worlds of fashion (the *chemise* is still a haunting memory), and food (*omelet, crêpes suzette*). Italian is active in its impact on musical terminology, and in the Renaissance the prestige of Latin made it a potent force in the world of learning. Again, such bombardments influence the individual who borrows a bit of verbiage which may or may not "catch on."

Sometimes, of course, an English speaker settles in an alien locale, broadens his personal experiences or imports a product from abroad. In such cases, the foreign name may remain attached to the place (*Tanganyika*), experience (*skiing*), or product (*vodka*). Its ability to welcome loanwords with open arms has made English the most cosmopolitan and varied language on the face of the earth.[33]

e. *The impact of events.* On November 4, 1957, a young lady in a Champaign-Urbana drugstore dropped a metal container. A person who heard the noise cried out as any of us might have done. In such circumstances, a listener might exclaim *Timber, Watch-it, Kaplop,* or any one of a number of expressions. Instead, this person uttered *Sputnik!* and placed this little scene at a point in history. At about the same time, a girl blundered forth the identical word when she intended to refer to an innocuous and non-orbiting *Spudnut.* The two instances demonstrate eloquently the impact of an event upon the speech of individuals. In that increasingly remote November the Russian satellite was on the mind of every American; visions of a scientifically peerless United States had dimmed, national pride had been hurt, and yet the imagination was stirred by the Russian achievement. The linguistic activity generated by this event is staggering when one collects it and views it as a historical phenomenon. From *Sputnik* came *Mutnik* and a thousand other *-niks.*[34] The language of the rocket and the satellite *blasted off* from the *launching pad* and took its place in the chronicle of English. If we project ourselves back into the more remote past, we shall find that the language has swayed under the impact of many an event. The Danish and Norman invasions, with their

loanword booty, may be viewed as such occurrences; so may the flowering of industry and technology in the 19th century; so indeed may the most stirring and far-reaching of events in English history, the coming of Christianity to Kent in 597.[35] The effect of Augustine, his monks and his successors upon the language cannot be measured. The subtle alchemy it worked on the meaning of the word *love* would be the subject for a lifetime of semantic research. The strange fate (*wyrd*) which brooded over the Germanic kingdoms of Anglo-Saxon England became the Boethean "fortune" which is a manifestation of divine Providence. *Priests* and *altars* came into the range of English experience adorned with the vestments of their Latin names. *Gospel* and *Thrines* were coined. The new religious force which banished old gods to Valhalla became a vital spark in language as well as in the intellects and imaginations of the people. If we could have visited Kent in that remarkable era, we would have found many individuals "uttering history" like the man in the drugstore who called out *Sputnik!* in amused surprise.

f. *Error.* The impact of sheer blunders on the language is a sobering and utterly humbling subject for contemplation. (It is also a very amusing one). The sensitive listener will detect such errors everywhere, chiefly in the speech of those around him, and if he possesses an honest mind as well as a good ear, he will be forced to admit that he is as capable of making a *blooper*[36] as the next man. Individual speech lapses (especially if they are spontaneously repeated by many people like *Cavalry* for *Calvary*) may in time become normal features in the language of a social group. As many useful forms have been arrived at by such means, there is no reason to look down one's nose at what passes as folly; many of man's greatest achievements have come about through accident rather than design. Perhaps it is man's genius to stumble blindly up the slope when he cannot march manfully to the summit. In using his language *homo-sapiens* tends (like Ethel Merman) to "do what comes naturally." The results may be riddled with what pass for "mistakes" in the eyes of society, but often the natural and erroneous is an improvement on the respectable and proper. Inspiration and error seem to be brothers under the skin.

A detailed analysis of error types would add an elaborate mass of material. It is sufficient to observe here that common mistakes frequently involve the *Assimilation* of one sound by another (Latin *affinitas* from *ad* + *fin;* MnE borrowing *affinity*), the *Dissimilation* of two like sounds (Latin *peregrinus* became late Latin *pelegrinus* from which comes our borrowed form pilgrim), and the *Metathesis*

of two sounds (OE *acsian becomes* MnE *ask*). Another type of error involves faulty do-it-yourself linguistic analysis, or *Popular Etymology* (American English *bushwhacker* is commonly associated with the business of "whacking bushes," the activity of a backwoodsman; the word, however, comes from the Dutch *boschwachter*, "forest watcher, woodsman." [37]). Popular Etymology may affect form, meaning, or both.

A particularly significant kind of error is *Analogic Creation.* Analogy is a variety of semi-logical analysis whereby the mind solves linguistic problems. Let us suppose that a speaker wishes to form the plural of *ox.* He may reason: the plural of *box* is *boxes;* therefore, the plural of *ox* is *oxes.* Or suppose that he wishes to use the past tense of *sing.* He may reason that since the past tense of *smile* is *smiled,* the past tense of *sing* is *singed.* In these arguments, the *box* and *smile* forms represent established patterns which the speaker has used to solve his problem. Most English speakers will, of course, know that the historically accurate forms should be *oxen* and *sang.* Nevertheless, children, people of little formal education, and occasionally even literate individuals fall prey to such analogical lapses. As analogy tends to reduce language phenomena to basic patterns, it has had a remarkable effect on the English language. Once, English possessed many nouns of the *ox-oxen* pattern. Today, only *ox* remains of this declension;[38] by analogy, its other surviving representatives have been leveled with nouns with an *-s* or *-es* plural. Strong Verbs like *sing-sang* were once more numerous than now, for many of them have become *-ed* (Weak) verbs.[39] The effects of analogy on English morphology could not be chronicled in a dozen volumes. Here, it is sufficient to call attention once again to the role of the individual innovator in this linguistic devastation. Even in error, however, English speakers seem to have a sound language instinct. The simple grammar which their foibles have helped create is a remarkable facet of modern English, a monument of mistakes upon which even the greatest poetry can rest secure.[40]

5. *Once change has been inaugurated by an individual (or individuals spontaneously), it may pass through an ever-widening circle of dialect groups* until it becomes a feature of the language as a whole; on the other hand, it may stop short at any dialect boundary and go no farther. Let us suppose that a certain Mrs. O'Brien has developed a new and delightful kind of chocolate cookie. In a whimsical moment, she coins the name *chookies* for these tasty confections.[41] Once, at Sunday dinner, she uses the name as she

passes a plate of *chookies* to her family. Dad laughs and junior teases her about it. As a joke they begin referring to *chookies* themselves. Soon, the entire family uses the new word. *Chookie* has now become a speech feature of a family's "dialect." Next, Mom tells Mrs. Johnson next door about *chookies*; Mrs. Johnson thereupon asks for the recipe and starts serving *chookies* to her family. By this time, Dad has become so used to calling his wife's masterpiece by the name that he offers a friend at work a *chookie* from his lunch box. Soon, the entire town is eating *chookies*. Another dialect ring has been reached. Next, Mrs. Prim, woman's editor of the local paper, prints the original recipe in her column under the heading: "The Whole Family Will Adore Chookies!" Women all over the county clip out the recipe and spread the gospel of *chookies* over the countryside and to other towns. Conceivably, the new word then spreads from ocean to ocean and is eventually adopted in British households. Thirty years hence, it is a respectable entry in the English dictionaries of the world. At that time, some hungry little boy sitting at the dinner table says to his mother, "Mom, pass those chocolate things, please." Mother—the invincible guardian of her offspring's language—corrects his English with a sweet smile. "Those are called *chookies,* dear." Mrs. O'Brien's casual coinage achieves its ultimate triumph when some well-intentioned etymologist writes a learned article to demonstrate that *chookie* represents a phonetic development found only among Dutch-speaking Indians of the Guineas.[42]

Having allowed *chookies* its day of glory, we must note that the fanciful (but not at all unusual) progression sketched above might have been halted at any of the numerous dialect frontiers. *Chookie* might have been avoided by the British as an Americanism. Miss Prim might never have used the word in her cookery column, dooming it to local use in Mrs. O'Brien's community. Or perhaps she might have used the word without its attracting notice. Moreover, Mrs. O'Brien might not have mentioned her confections to the lady next door, or that lady might have found chookies an irritating term. For that matter, Mr. O'Brien might have exclaimed, "For God's sake, Margaret, quit using those silly words." In that case the invaluable chookies would have vanished into the mists of lost verbiage. The odds against a given word going so far in the world would, in fact, be great. Yet, how did *brownie* (American) come into being if not by this process? Or the internationally-known *lady finger* (General English)?

In our hypothetical success story of a particular innovation, we have carried a word through many dialect rings. In an age of mass

communications, the process of acceptance may be dramatically shortened. It is even possible for an innovation to leap from the tongue of an individual into the widest possible usage. Such is the case with Winston Churchill's memorable compound *Iron Curtain,* first used in Sir Winston's commencement address at the University of Missouri in 1946. Reused by journalists in our great newspapers, and employed by commentators on radio newscasts, the term became the most successful coinage of our generation, yielding further fruit in the analogical *Bamboo Curtain.* Such rapid crashes through the dialect barrier are a feature of 20th Century English and should provide much valuable data for future linguists.

6. *The movement of innovations underlies the entire study of dialect.* When innovations are "trapped" in a speech area, that area differs from other speech areas of the language, which are innovating and accepting innovations of their own. As no two areas develop dialect features at the same speed or in precisely the same departments of the language, both a relative conservatism and radicalism may be observed. The major dialect of American English, for example, retains certain features which standard British English has lost, particularly in the realm of pronunciation. On the other hand, our vocabulary on this side of the Atlantic has been anything but conservative!

Whether radical or conservative or both, a dialect is constantly pumping its life-blood, change. It must 1) continue developing as an independent dialect; 2) break through the dialect barriers surrounding it and flood other dialects with its features; 3) allow itself to be engulfed by another dialect; or 4) compromise with another dialect after a hardy struggle. In an era of mass communication and of close social ties between the major English-speaking nations, contemporary English appears to be working its way toward a master, boundary-scorning dialect. Unless some catastrophe or shift of cultural alliances forestalls this natural development, our master dialect should be upon us in the matter of a mere century or two—a short time indeed in the total context of language history. This dialect will undoubtedly represent a compromise (the fourth possibility above), a blend of American and British speech characteristics. The ingredients in the dialect brew will be mingled, but we can be certain that "Americanisms" will be well represented. The result will be a mixed blessing at best, for while unity is a precious possession, so are individuality and independence. Still, though the speech of the Cockney and the Texan may retreat

into the past, the human tongue itself defies standardization. While there is an English language, there will be change, and while there is change, there will be life.[48]

Notes

1. The most original group of contemporary descriptive linguists, the *Structural Linguists,* makes extensive use of recordings. Every teacher should know the basic work of this "school": C. C. Fries, *The Structure of English* (New York, 1952).

2. See Section IV of the bibliography for the great monuments of this field.

3. There is a distinction to be made between tracing an etymology and identifying a vocabulary source. An etymologist would trace the English word *adjoin* all the way back to Latin *adjungere* and break it down into its components, the prefix *ad* and the simple verb *jungere.* The student of word sources will be primarily interested in identifying the word as a borrowing from Old French. He will look for clues to enable him to spot the immediate source and, if possible, determine the date of entry; in this word, the diphthong *oi* and its pronunciation enable him to do both.

4. The interested reader may refer to the brilliant use of place-name evidence in reconstructing the early English settlements of Britain, by Sir Frank Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England,* (2nd ed., Oxford, 1947), *passim.*

5. In these idealized sketches, the interdependence of the three linguists is necessarily underplayed. In actual practice, the comparativist may develop his chosen language historically or descriptively. The descriptivist may glance back in time or across the boundary of another language; likewise, the historian may do a rather static description of language at a given time in the past or employ comparative methods in his dialect study. The three perspectives, thus, shift freely.

6. Many of the works in the bibliography provide an outline or diagram of the entire Indo-European language family; *e.g.,* the Merriam-Webster *Collegiate Dictionary,* under "Indo-European languages." The Romance group descends from Vulgar Latin, not directly from the eloquent periods of Cicero.

7. For these words from the *Rituale Romanum,* 1944 edition, I am grateful to Father Joseph Mackowiak of the University of Illinois Newman Club.

8. The Old and Middle English texts of the XXIII Psalm are printed in Rolf Kaiser, ed., *Medieval English* (3rd ed., Berlin, 1958), pp. 70-71. Distinctive Old and Middle English letters have been replaced by modern equivalents.

9. A clear general discussion of the fixers will be found in Albert C. Baugh, *A History of the English Language* (2nd ed., New York, 1957), p. 314 ff.

10. *Ibid.,* p. 335 ff.

11. *Ibid.,* pp. 353-55.

12. See Arthur G. Kennedy, *Current English,* (Boston, 1935), pp. 297-303; Paul Roberts, *Understanding Grammar* (New York, 1954), pp. 121-22 ("Verb-Adverb Combinations"); Baugh, *op.cit., pp.* 401-402, and references.

13. In Old English, however, the sounds formed a single syllable. Hereafter, the following abbreviations will be used: OE (Old English,

c. 449-1100); ME (Middle English, 1100-1500); MnE (Modern English, c. 1500-1960). As English displays a continuous development throughout its history, these periods and their dates are a matter of convenience.

14. Many of the words cited in this paper are discussed in one or more of the discussions listed in bibliography sections I, II, III, and VI. The reader is encouraged to use the word indices of these volumes for fuller commentaries. Also, all but the most recent innovations will appear in the appropriate historical dictionaries.

15. A convenient brief discussion of *deer* and other (frequently analogical) plurals of this type will be found in J. N. Hook and E. G. Mathews, *Modern American Grammar and Usage* (New York, 1956), p. 151.

16. Compare, however, the unorthodox spellings in ads and in brand naming, e.g., Corn Chex, Bar-B-Que Snax, Star-Kist Tuna, Soft-Weve (toilet paper, euphemistically called tissue).

17. *Physicist* was coined by William Whewell, who, writing in 1840, also coined *scientist;* both words are discussed in E. H. Sturtevant, *An Introduction to Linguistic Science* (New Haven, 1947), p. 120. *Chortle* appears in Lewis Carroll's "The Jabberwocky." *Kodak* is the strange creation of George Eastman.

18. For the type of error, see assimilation, p. 15. The *i*, a front vowel, has transformed the *o* into a front vowel. Changes of this kind are called *i-umlaut* or *i-mutation* changes. See Baugh, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

19. Analogy is discussed below, p. 16. The relation of analogy to *i-umlaut* and similar changes must remain a matter of speculation, but in my opinion must have played a significant role. The *goose-tooth* analogy is simply a convenient representation of the analogic process involved. The true proposition is the following: if *o* becomes *e* before *i* in a given word (or words), then *o* becomes *e* before *i* in other words. The kind of word (noun, verb, adjective) is immaterial. The reader should distinguish between changes due to the influence of other sounds or analogy, and those changes which occur without external pressure; for the latter, see p. 12: "4b. The nature of sounds."

20. The occasional plural *mongeese* (for the accepted form *mongooses*) represents a belated "analogical umlaut." Such contemporary lapses are based on a pattern established exclusively by the *nouns* retaining their umlauted plurals. Contrast the original "*o* becomes *e* before *i*" pattern cited in n. 19.

21. An example of metathesis; see pp. 15-16.

22. An example of dissimilation; see p. 15. In the case of *libary*, one of two like sounds (the 1st *r*) has not been transformed but totally lost.

23. Both are examples of analogy; see p. 16. The form *brought* is a special kind of Weak Verb past tense; *bringed* merely represents the more usual pattern.

24. Perhaps the closest approach to "group innovation" is found in the "regular" developments discussed in 4b, p. 12. Such changes are not due to conscious effort by a group, but, again, individual speech is the instigator of the "sound drifts" recorded there.

25. Like many coinages, *poke-slow* is based on an error pattern; see metathesis, pp. 15–16. Cp. *Cavalry* for *Calvary*, p. 10.

26. *Minuscule* (from "The Comedian as the Letter C") represents a semantic innovation, as does *wimpled* (from "Morning Midday and Evening Sacrifice"); *vorpal* (from "The Jabberwocky") is another coinage.

27. Consult S. Robertson, *Development of Modern English,* revised by F. G. Cassidy (New York, 1954), pp. 245-250. For yesterdays euphemisms, see J. B. Greenough and G. L. Kitteridge, *Words and Their Ways in English Speech* (New York, 1901), pp. 300-308.

28. The following discussion is an interpretation of a highly involved, vigorously disputed subject. Regular sound changes have been variously explained and challenged by certain linguists who doubt their absolute regularity. A fuller elaboration of views stated in this paragraph would be based upon the concept of the *Phoneme* and its constituent *Allophones;* see the discussion of these in Sturtevant, *op. cit.,* pp. 14-18. For interpretations of regular change, see Willem L. Graff, *Language and Languages* (New York, 1932) pp. 215-76; Leonard Bloomfield, *Language,* (New York, 1933), pp. 346-368; Louis H. Gray, *Foundations of Language* (New York, 1939), pp. 83-87; William Entwistle, *Aspects of Language* (London, 1953), pp. 34-70; Sturtevant, *op. cit., pp.* 74-84.—The reader must distinguish between the changes discussed in this paragraph and those which depend upon sound environment or analogy; see note 19 above and the discussion of error types, pp. 15-16.

29. See Baugh, *op. cit.,* pp. 287-89, for a brief description of this shift.

30. For Grimm's and Verner's Laws, see Baugh, *op. cit.,* pp. 20-22; Robertson and Cassidy, *op. cit.,* pp. 28-32.

31. See Samuel Moore, *Historical Outlines of English Sounds and Inflections,* revised by A. H. Marckwardt (Ann Arbor, 1951), p. 89.

32. Collected by one of my students after the Little Rock incident; an excellent example of the impact of events on language. See below, 4.e., pp. 14-15.

33. For loanwords in English, see the various historical studies in Part II of the Bibliography. Baugh's treatment is particularly comprehensive.

34. *Sputnik* words will be examined in my forthcoming paper on historical linguistics in the classroom.

35. See Baugh, *op. cit.,* p. 94 ff.

36. An example of a successful contemporary coinage. *Blooper* was apparently coined by the T.V. producer Kermit Schafer; see his collection of radio and television lapses, *Pardon My Blooper,* (Crest Books, Greenwich, Conn., 1959). This book provides many interesting and typical instances of linguistic error.

37. So the *New World Dictionary,* "bushwacker." It is interesting to note that the other two collegiate dictionaries (Merriam-Webster and *American College Dictionary*) fail to note this derivation. Harold Whitehall's splendid etymological work in the *New World* makes it generally superior to its excellent competitors as an aid to the language historian.

38. *Children* does not historically belong to the "ox-declension;" its "proper" plural ending is preserved in the *r* of the contemporary form; to this, a *second* plural ending — that found in *oxen* — has been added. Historically, *children* is as redundant as *bookses* or *shoeses.*

39. A convenient discussion of the movement of Strong Verbs to the Weak Verb class is found in Baugh, *op. cit.,* pp. 195-97 and 299.

40. The above paragraphs only introduce this matter of error in language. Many interesting kinds of error have not been mentioned. For further information see the classic treatment by E. H. Sturtevant, *op. cit.,* pp. 85-122, and also Robertson and Cassidy, *op. cit.,* pp. 76-85.

41. Cp. *chortle,* a similar "blend" of two words. Such words are discussed frequently by linguists, e.g., Sturtevant, *op. cit.,* pp. 110-12.

42. The study of word origins and vocabulary sources is often capricious. The investigator should always check what one "authority" says against the views of others. See Robertson and Cassidy, *op. cit.*, pp. 273-77.

43. For further discussion of dialectology, see the works cited in note 28. For the American dialects, see the bibliography, Part III, and Baugh, *op. cit.*, pp. 406-63. Many "Americanisms," incidentally, stem from British dialect forms.

Historical Linguistics—an Introductory Bibliography

The following works are standard authorities on the matters treated. They represent those volumes which I should recommend for one wishing to build up a knowledge of historical linguistics on relatively simple but secure foundations. Other popular treatments might be added to these titles, but I have always held that a short reading list is more enticing than a long and involved one. Those wishing to investigate further will find ample references in Baugh, and in Robertson and Cassidy, to keep them busy.

I. General treatments of language containing material on historical linguistics.

Bloomfield, Leonard, *Language,* New York, 1933. (A linguistic masterpiece; more difficult than Sturtevant.)

Sapir, Edward, *Language,* Harvest Books (paperback), N.Y., 1955. (Brief and stimulating.)

Sturtevant, Edgar H., *An Introduction to Linguistic Science,* New Haven, 1947; paperback reprint, 1960. (An excellent brief account; a good starting point.)

II. The history of the English Language

Baugh, Albert C., *A History of the English Language,* N.Y., 2nd ed., 1957. (A detailed but not unduly technical account, strong on social backgrounds. Contains a comprehensive treatment of loanwords and a discussion of American English.)

Jesperson, Otto, *Growth and Structure of the English Language,* Anchor Books (paperback), Garden City, N.Y., 1955. (A stimulating and imaginative brief presentation by one of the greatest students of English.)

Moore, Samuel, revised by A. H. Marckwardt, *Historical Outlines of English Sounds and Inflections,* Ann Arbor, 1951. (May be used for its paradigms of changing forms and for its record of sound changes. The beginner should not attempt to master this material.)

Potter, Simeon, *Our Language,* Penguin Books (paperback), Harmondsworth, England, 1950. (Another brief treatment notable for its compression and range.)

Robertson, Stuart, revised by F. G. Cassidy, *The Development of Modern English,* N.Y., 1954. (A mine of delightful and informative lore.)

III. American English.

Marckwardt, Albert H., *American English,* Oxford University Press (paperback), N.Y., 1958. (Good brief historical account.)

Pyles, Thomas, *Words and Ways of American English,* N.Y., 1952. (Delightful writing combined with good scholarship.)

IV. Historical Dictionaries. The following works trace word form and meaning, giving numerous dated quotations. After protracted study, the investigator will make use of other historical dictionaries, but these are the fundamental works.

Craigie, Sir William, and James R. Hulbert, eds., *A Dictionary of American English on Historical Principles,* 4 vols., Chicago, 1938-44.

Mathews, Milford M., *A Dictionary of Americanisms on Historical Principles,* 2 vols., Chicago, 1951.

Murray, James A. H. *et. al.,* eds., *The New English Dictionary on Historical Principles,* 12 vols. and supplement, Oxford, 1884-1928. (The finest dictionary in the world. Also called The Oxford English Dictionary.)

V. Phonetics. A treatment of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) will prove helpful. The conscientious student of language should learn the IPA symbols and acquire a knowledge of the classification of language sounds. A convenient treatment is

Whitehall, Harold, "Modern American English pronunciation," *New World Dictionary,* pp. xv-xxi. A table of IPA symbols appears on p. x.

The discussion in Robertson and Cassidy, pp. 52-76, is also good.

VI. Other readings.

Greenough, James B., and George Lyman Kittredge, *Words and Their Ways in English Speech,* New York, 1901. (An excellent, readable presentation of semantics and other aspects of word study. That many of the discussed words have developed radically since this book was written adds to its interest.)

Hook, J. N., and E. G. Mathews, *Modern American Grammar and Usage,* N.Y., 1956. (Brings historical linguistics to bear upon descriptive grammar. A sound presentation.)

Myers, Edward D., *The Foundations of English,* N.Y., 1940. (A detailed but well-directed guide to the languages which have influenced English; contains chapters on the history of the language, meaning, etc. The individual who works his way seriously through this volume will find it very rewarding.)

Historical Linguistics in the Classroom

By Louis A. Muinzer

In the *Illinois English Bulletin,* May, 1960, I attempted to set forth the underlying principles of historical linguistics.[1] It is my firm belief that the study of these principles and their ramifications should play an important role in the training of the prospective English teacher. Indeed, it stands to reason that if a teacher knows little about the historical study of language, his command of his chosen subject must be two-dimensional and superficial; it is not enough to know how to describe the English language at a given time. To teach English as it exists in a given era, one must know much about the forces which are constantly reshaping it, and which scorn the static harmonies of our textbooks. Through a sound training in historical linguistics, the teacher is able to understand and to teach the English language with wisdom and maturity; he knows what English is because he knows how it came to be what it is, and he can glimpse at least dimly what it will be in the future. What he teaches in his classroom must almost necessarily gain in depth, for his instruction will be based not on arbitrary prescriptive pronouncements, but rather upon a thoughtful awareness of English as is, was, and will be. On the other hand, if the teacher turns his back on language history and concentrates exclusively on descriptive techniques, he is like a physiologist who studies dogs' tails by contemplating the tail of a stuffed spaniel. If he looks long enough, he will be able to describe the appendage, but he will have failed to learn the most important truth about a living dog's tail—the fact that it wags. The stuffed spaniel's tail can only tell the researcher that the tail exists; it can tell him nothing about the tail's movement and responsiveness. If a caninologist were to approach his subject in such a fashion, he would quickly be branded a fool. A similar epithet may be applied to any teacher who tries to take the wag out of language.

Historical linguistics, however, is not merely a valuable conditioner of the teacher's attitude; the subject has specific, practical value in the high school and college classroom which has yet been scarcely explored. Because we are primarily engaged in the busi-

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In this sequel to "History: the Life in Language," published in the Bulletin *of May, 1960, Dr. Muinzer has condensed research in historical linguistics covering many years. He is imbued with the idea that the principles of linguistics, if properly presented, are within the grasp of secondary school students, and has sought to make language live for them by presenting exercises which they may pursue with profit. It is for us, as teachers of English, to accept the challenge of linguistics which he shares.*

ness of teaching young people to read and to write, we suppose, reasonably enough, that descriptive techniques are our primary linguistic tools. To a great extent, the supposition holds true; if we are to teach our students to use and to understand the language, we must describe for them the basic features of contemporary American English, and, if necessary, drill its salient features into their consciousness. Nevertheless, historical analysis should play an important role in our general English program. Unless each of our students understands the principles of linguistic history, he cannot understand English, and if he cannot understand English, he cannot be expected to write it or read it with much intelligence. Furthermore, if he does not understand our language, he will probably consider his English exercise work a dull concoction of sadistic rules and other spirit-breaking tortures. I am perhaps prejudiced, but I sincerely believe that only historical study can display the vitality, the movement, the strange life of language which makes English worth the learning in the first place. It combats the stuffed-spaniel approach of the extreme descriptivist, whose teaching usually produces stuffed students who write stuffed English. Used imaginatively in the classroom, the historical approach reveals to the student that he *participates* in the English language, that he is the heir of a grand tradition which he must use and enjoy and pass on to his successors. Along with a sense of obligation, the student gains an enjoyment of language study for its own sake—a delight in English which can never be inspired by spelling drills and static grammatical exercises. Only when a student finds such delight in words can he hope to become a successful writer and a perceptive reader; only when he has experienced the joy of language will he desire to work, to drill and to exercise himself until he has mastered it.

I do not suggest, of course, that descriptive grammar be ignored at the expense of historical analysis; I merely decry the abuse of the former and the rejection of the latter. Historical and descriptive linguistics depend upon one another; they cannot and should not be separated. In practice, the teacher who wishes to put his instruction into historical perspective need not do so at the expense of descriptive study. Rather, he should employ the historical approach as a catalyst, a vitalizing element which gives meaning and direction to the conventional busy-work of English learning. Furthermore, the successful teacher must always stress the *principles* of historical linguistics and never allow his students to become lost in a forest of details. Our young people have enough

descriptive data to master without our adding to their burden. Simply learning the orthography of Late Modern English is chore enough for the average teen-ager, and contemporary usage and grammar tax his memory still further. Historical data, therefore, should be made subservient to historical fundamentals, and these fundamentals should always be closely related to the more conventional work of the class.

The principles of language history, if presented in a straightforward fashion, can be grasped by the average thirteen-year-old without great difficulty. The reader of my earlier paper already knows how simple these principles are:

1. The sound, form, and meaning of a language change through both intent and accident.
2. Linguistic change is inaugurated by the individual.
3. Linguistic change flows through ever-widening circles of usage or is checked at some dialect boundary.

To these three principles we may add a generalization based upon the observation of language history:

4. A language at a given time is both a reflection of that time and a link with the past and the future.

That is to say, we speak as we do in 1960 because our language takes the imprint of contemporary life. At the same time, our speech is conditioned by a long linguistic tradition and will itself condition the language of ensuing eras. Historically speaking, language is a tension between the old and the new, the linguistically conservative and the linguistically radical. Stated in human terms, the tension exists between society as the champion of conservatism and the individual as innovator and rebel. We may represent the conflict graphically as a tug of war between the two opposing forces:

inertia	*change*
traditional language	contemporary language
society	the individual

The teen-ager who can understand this tension and its underlying principles will not be transformed into a master philologist overnight; he will have learned, however, to look at English from a new and stimulating vantage point: he will have acquired a historical sense. Every new linguistic fact which he learns thereafter will be colored and enriched by Time.

But how is the teacher to bring these principles to life in the classroom? There are many ways to do this, and each teacher must find those methods which are best suited to the academic level and

maturity of his own students. There is no sure-fire formula for teaching historical linguistics, and anyone who attempts to find one is not a teacher at all, but merely an Educationalist. In the following pages, I can only outline certain procedures which I have worked out for my own university classes.[2] My students are more advanced than those encountered in the typical high school classroom, and many are teacher-trainees with a special incentive to learn English. On the other hand, a few of them know much more about the principles of linguistic science than the average high school freshman. If I were attempting to adapt the following material for use in pre-college classes, I should make only superficial changes: I should eliminate much of the special terminology used in the exercises, and supply much of the detailed analytic work in our class discussions. For instance, I should expect a high school sophomore to understand the concept of assimilation (Part I below), but I should not expect him to learn of the various kinds of assimilative change: the distinctive varieties of assimilation which could be noted as collected materials interpreted by the group. In sum, I should try to meet the younger student half way, but I should also attempt to challenge his ingenuity and resourcefulness. The experienced high school teacher, however, will know better than I how to modify and to adapt these exercises, which are to be considered merely as suggestions.

The reader should not be discouraged by references in these exercises to dictionaries, periodicals, and other linguistic works which will be found only in a large, well-stocked library. While my own students customarily employ a great many dictionaries and other linguistic aids in their assignments, not even the great OED is indispensable.[3] The high school teacher should see to it, however, that the library reference shelf contains at least the relatively inexpensive *Shorter Oxford Dictionary* and Waldron's useful little *Dictionary of Americanisms.* Armed with these two works and yesterday's newspaper, the teacher can modify virtually any of the following procedures. Teaching historical linguistics doesn't require a great library; it requires great resourcefulness and imagination.

As space is at a premium, I have not included here any exercises in foreign borrowings, dialectology, place-names, and a number of other historical areas. Rather, I have selected the procedures which stress the basic principles set forth above and in my earlier paper.[4] The exercises in lapses, coinages, and semantics are designed to demonstrate that language changes, that it starts with the innovation of an individual through society like a linguistic disease. The

"historical impact" exercise relates language to time. In essence, then, the following exercises deal with the major ingredients of linguistic history: time and change. If a student can successfully grasp these two concepts, he will never again be intimidated by stuffed spaniels.

I. The Study of Error

The examination of accidental linguistic changes—of lapses, errors or bloopers—serves as an excellent introduction to language history. The subject demonstrates to the student that language is neither infallible nor fixed, that it flows along relentlessly whether we want it to or not. To bring lapses into his classroom, the teacher may distribute a mimeographed outline of possible errors and explain each variety. This outline may be based upon the treatment of lapses by E. H. Sturtevant,[5] though certain of his lapse categories may be conveniently simplified. When each kind of speech lapse has been illustrated and explained in the classroom, the students are sent forth to collect lapses in the speech of their friends and classmates. For this purpose, they are asked to procure a 4 x 6 scratch pad and (writing lengthwise) to record one lapse per sheet. The necessary information is recorded thus:

Type of lapse

Erroneous utterance
Intended utterance

Description of the speaker (brief) Name of collector

In collecting lapses, it is essential that the investigator know what the speaker *intended* to say; if the speaker does not correct his error and if his intended utterance is not obvious to the collector, he must stop the speaker and question him about the matter. (As Professor Sturtevant was well aware, lapse collecting offers an easy way to break friendships. The collector should be cautioned not to interrupt impetuous individuals who are quick with their fists.) A description of the person making the mistake is also important; his name is immaterial, but his age and background may be of value. The description need not be long-winded, however: "high school history teacher," "four-year-old girl," "elderly Spanish American War veteran who is hard of hearing," or the like will usually suffice. Using the lapse outline, the student has little difficulty in collecting a surprisingly large number of verbal blunders. The exercise teaches him to *hear* language and makes him aware of the rather disturbing fact that his ear is constantly being bombarded

by lapses. After a few days as a lapse collector he begins to wonder why language has not changed much more radically than it has since Hengest and Horsa landed in England in 449. If one ten thousandth of all speech lapses committed daily were to catch on in the English language, the senior high school student would not be able to read the themes which he had written four years earlier as a freshman. As the collector wanders along the by-ways of blunder, he becomes conscious of the strong tradition which preserves our language against this constant onslaught; at the same time, he can be made to realize that the relentless pulse of speech innovations is the blood of language, a symbol of its life.

For the teacher who wishes to try the lapse experiment, the following outline may be of assistance. It is based upon the outline which I give to my students, but it incorporates brief definitions of the various varieties of lapse and gives examples of each. A few of the examples are taken from Sturtevant [S] or other specified sources, but the others were collected by my own students.

An Outline of Speech Lapses[6]

I. *Assimilation.* Typically, the lapses under this heading involve two sounds (or groups of sounds) which become alike. However, the simple occurrence of a sound out of its proper place in a sequence may also be included under this head. Assimilative lapses fall into two general divisions: those which involve the *anticipation* of a sound before its proper position and those which involve the occurrence of a sound after its natural place in the utterance (*lag*).

A. *Anticipation.* A sound occurs before its proper position and characteristically replaces a preceding sound. Four varieties of anticipation may be recognized.

1. *Anticipation alone.* A sound is uttered before its proper place, but no other change occurs.
   Very*ious* curious (for "Very curious"). Here, the sound group *-ious* was uttered before it should have been.
2. *Anticipation with substitution.* Here the anticipated sound replaces a sound preceding it. Sometimes the two sounds involved occur side-by-side (as in *assign,* ultimately from Latin *ad* plus *signare;* the *s* was anticipated and substituted for the preceding *d*); this common lapse is called *contact assimilation.*
   *Sh*ine up for Sheequon (for "Sign up for Sheequon"). The *sh* sound of "Sheequon" has replaced the *s* sound of *sign.* Contrast *Veryious curious* above: there no substitution was involved.
3. *Anticipation with substitution and loss.* Now matters become rather more complicated: the anticipated sound replaces a preceding sound, but is not uttered in its own proper place.
   Put my *coat* in your pocket (for "put my cup in your coat pocket") [S]. Here, *coat* is substituted for *cup* and is not uttered in its proper place.

4. *Haplology.* This scholarly name identifies the most amusing of the anticipatory lapses; here, two like sounds are separated in a sequence of sounds; the speaker jumps blithely from one to the other, omitting all intervening sounds. It is as if the tongue had momentarily slipped a cog.

I nee*d*ly tell you (for "I need hardly tell you"). The speaker has passed from the *d* of *need* to the *d* of *hardly* and has missed entirely the *har* of the latter word.

Ba*tt*erloo (for "Battle of Waterloo") [S]. The speaker reached the *t* sound of *Battle* and jumped to the same sound in *Waterloo.*

B. *Lag.* This is the opposite of anticipation. Here, a sound is uttered after its proper place in a sequence and characteristcially replaces another sound. We may recognize three kinds of lag.

1. *Lag alone.* A sound is simply repeated after its proper position in an utterance; no other change occurs. Rare.

a wonderful b*r*uy (for " . . . buy"). The *r* of *wonderful* has lagged.

bushes and tree*s*es (for "bushes and trees") [S]. Contrast "I hate you mee*c*es to pieces," discussed below, p. 33; in that instance, I.A.1. Anticipation alone is involved.

2. *Lag with substitution.* A "lagging" sound replaces a sound following it.

You should have seen Rosie *r*ush (for " . . . Rosie blush"). The *r* of *Rosie* has replaced the sounds *bl* of *blush.*

3. *Lag with substitution and loss.* A sound is not uttered in its proper place, but is substituted for another, later sound. Very rare.

I alwa*v*e said (for "I've always said") [S]. In this utterance, the *v* sound of *I've* has been omitted in its expected place and has been substituted for the *z* (spelled *s*) of *always.*

II. *Metathesis.* Sturtevant considers this kind of lapse a variety of assimilation, but it is better to treat it as a separate variety of blunder. In the case of metathesis, two sounds (or groups of sounds) merely change place.

Met some *g*ilk (for "Get some milk"). The first sounds of the first and third words have been switched around.

What *left* is *else* (for "What else is left"). Here, two entire words have changed places.

Students groaning on their *b*eery *w*enches (for "Students groaning on their weary benches"). This is one of the classic metathesis lapses for which Dr. Spooner of New College, Oxford, was famous; hence the term *Spoonerism* for such errors.

III. *Dissimilation.* This is the opposite of assimilation; two like sounds in an utterance become unalike or one of the two is lost. We may recognize two varieties of dissimilation.

A. *Dissimilation alone.* One of two like sounds disappears.

sa*t*istics (for "'statistics"). The second and third *t* sounds have caused the first *t* of "statistics" to be omitted.

Bwig Buther is watching you (for "Big Brother"). Notice that two lapses occur here; the loss of the first *r* of *Brother* through the influence of the sound, and the anticipation (I.A.1.) of *w* of *watching* in *bwig.*

B. ***Dissimilation with substitution.*** In this instance, a new sound is substituted for one of two like sounds.

terrible ***p***est today (for "terrible test today"). The *t* sound of *terrible,* the second *t* of *test* and the *t* of *today* have conspired to undermine the first *t* of *test.* Those who have a knowledge of phonetics will be aware that the voiceless stop *t* has been changed to another voiceless stop, *p*.

tup of coffee (for "cup of coffee").

IV. ***Analogy.*** This is the easiest to describe and the most difficult to explain of the various lapse types. By analogy, a word is made to conform to some familiar speech pattern. The process may be represented as a proposition: if many words fall into a given pattern, a particular word should fall into it, too. Under this heading falls the phenomenon called *functional shift,* the transformation of one part of speech into another. The following proposition demonstrates how a specimen verb may become a noun: if many verbs (*to hit, to run,* etc.) may be used as nouns (a *hit* or a *run* in baseball, for example), then *to slide* may also be used as a noun ("He started his *slide* into second base too late"). For another type of analogic lapse, see the discussion of *dulating* below. There is a short general discussion of analogic change in "History," p. 16. Sturtevant and many of the works in the "History" bibliography discuss the subject at length.

*her*sterics (a three-year-old child's description of a woman's emotions). By analogy with *hysterics* taken to be *his* plus *(s)terics.*

*de*shausted (for "exhausted"). A seven-year-old's creation by analogy with numerous *de*-plus-root words in English.

dulating ("flat," "level,"). Frederick T. Wood, *An Outline History of the English Language* (reprinted, London, 1954), pp. 193-94, reports finding this word in a student's essay. The form is derived analogically from *undulating* (from Latin *unda,* "a wave"). The fledgling writer thought that the *un-* at the beginning of the word was the negative prefix; he reasoned that removal of this prefix would reverse the meaning of *undulating* and produce a word meaning "not possessing wavy characteristics, i.e., flat." Note that Lapse Type VI. Popular etymology is involved in the error.—Lapses like *dulating* are called *back formations* and are sometimes imitated; see coinage type 3, p. 37.

V. ***Contamination.*** The blending of two words into one or the substitution of one word in a phrase for another. This error is sometimes due to the association of ideas, but in other instances only a depth psychologist could explain the blunder.

Freudian *sleep* (for "Freudian slip"). The association of Sigmund Freud and dreams perhaps explains this lapse. Possibly the lightly-stressed *i* in *Freudian* may also have been influential; if so Lag with substitution (I.B.2) is involved.

cut across the *yawn* (for " . . . yard/lawn"). The words *yard* and *lawn* are uttered simultaneously with the ludicrous result noted.

that little ball *point* man (for " . . . bald-headed man"). This lapse is linguistically inexplicable. Apparently the speaker was thinking about a ball-point pen. Possibly the gentleman in question possessed a pointed head. Unfortunately the collector either did not possess this phrenological information or else forgot to pass it along.

VI. *Popular etymology.* A change in form due to a faulty analysis of a word's derivation.

flutterby (for "butterfly"). This rearrangement of compound elements crops up occasionally and I recall hearing it in my boyhood. The false analysis supposes metathesis (II. above). The amateur etymologist—and entymologist for that matter—is disturbed by the fact that most butterflies aren't buttery-yellow. He theorizes that the proper name of these fluttery insects should be *flutterby*. The name is such an apt one that poetry is on his side, even if lingistic history must reject his view.

dulating. See IV. Analogy above.

VII. *Shortening.* In "History," p. 13, I spoke of the "drum beat" of the English language—the strong stress—which transformed Old English *godum* to *godan*, then *godan* to *gooden* and *goode*, which finally became our modern monosyllable *good*. The weakening and loss of syllables is a kind of lapse, although Sturtevant does not include it in his analysis of error phenomena. Characteristically, the lost syllables are unstressed ones. The following examples from children's pronunciation are found in Robertson and Cassidy, p. 205:

fessor (for "professor")
spression (for "expression")
member (for "remember")

When the student has become lapse conscious and has collected his specimens for class discussion, he is ready to begin the second stage of the experiment. Lapse gathering is valuable in itself, but it gains greatly in significance when it is related to the language at large. To make this relation, the teacher may ask his students to submit similar lapses which have "caught on" in their family or social circle. This assignment demonstrates that speech blunders are sometimes accepted by small groups, who adopt lapses as dialect features. Such catch-ons are particularly likely to occur if the given lapse is inherently amusing or if the perpetrator of the error is a child. As most families use at least a few dialect lapses of this kind, the students have little difficulty in gathering a specimen or two. When they finish collecting their work, they should identify the kind of lapse underlying each catch-on and describe briefly the group which has adopted it; the identity of the originator of the lapse should also be established if this is possible. Here are a few examples of catch-ons submitted by my students:

ki*n*chin (for "kitchen"). The orthography suggests that the *t* of "kitchen" has been replaced by an anticipated *n;* however, no sound has been lost, as the reader will hear if he pronounces both forms aloud. The lapse is I.A.1. Anticipation alone. *Kinchin* is the habitual pronunciation of a certain five-year-old boy; the lapse has become a feature of his own personal "dialect."

Gor*d*ean (for "Gordon Dean"). An excellent example of Lapse Type I.A.4. Haplology. Like the word above, *Gordean* originated in the mouth of a child; unlike *kinchin*, however, *Gordean* became the dia-

lect property of a family group. The collector notes as follows: "My nephew couldn't pronounce his baby brother's name, Gordon Dean. So he shortened it to Gordean and now the entire family uses it." Note that the speech of the adults conformed to that of the youngster, not *vice versa*.

*occi*fer (for "officer"); *f*eak and *w*eeble (for "weak and feeble"). Both are examples of III. Metathesis which caught on in different families.

I did it *b*yself (for "I did it by myself"). A small child's oft-repeated lapse which became a family saying. The child has skipped from the *y* of *by* to the same sound in *my*. Type I.A.4. Haplology.

The cataloguing of such catch-ons is rendered difficult by the fact that many people who have never heard of Professor Sturtevant *consciously* imitate genuine lapses. Such imitations are actually coinages and should probably be discussed in the next section of the paper, but as they depend upon lapse types it will be convenient to deal with them here. These lapse coinages assume the appearance of genuine blunders, but they are linguistically very sophisticated, and should be separated from true lapses by the student collector. Examples:

*b*umb *d*unny (for "dumb bunny"). Recorded as a common term in the collector's high school vocabulary; part of "a complete double-talk vocabulary." Cp. my comments on *poke-slow*, in "History, p. 11. The coinage imitates Lapse Type II. Metathesis.

book*ses*, shoe*ses* and other double plurals. This inflectional redundancy is habitual at a certain university residence house. The collector notes: "Possibly this [practice] comes from mice-ses for mice on the 'Huckleberry Hound' [TV cartoon] show which many of the girls watch." The girls are to be commended for their good taste in television entertainment; the "Huckleberry Hound" show is one of the few linguistically significant programs currently on the air, and every philologist should watch it religiously, note pad in hand. Actually, the collector is referring here to a form employed constantly as a personal dialect feature of Mr. Jinks the cat. The form is best represented orthographically by *meeces* and originates in Jinksey's oft-repeated battle-cry: "I hate you meeces to pieces!" The frustrated and overwrought feline has fallen into Lapse I.A.2. Anticipation with substitution (cp. *pieces*). Jinks was probably influenced as well by Type IV. Analogy, for the radical vowel in *meeces* seems to echo that in such umlaut plurals as *geese*, and *teeth*. The *ee* of *meeces* also restores the pre-Great Vowel Shift pronunciation of the *i* of *mice* but this development is probably coincidental; as far as I know, Jinksey has never taken a course in Middle English, and I seriously doubt that he has mastered Renaissance vowel developments on his own.—The residence girls, by following the inflectional pattern of *meeces*, have created similar forms analogically (Type IV).

Yank (for "Yankee"); confab (for "confabulation"); math (for "mathematics"); ag (for "agriculture"); bus (for "omnibus"). Such clipped forms are imitations of Lapse Type VII. Shortening,

although some of the examples seem to violate the principle of accentuation there set forth. *Yank* and *ag* retain the stressed syllables of the words from which they are derived; *bus* may have developed from the plural *omnibuses* and may therefore represent a stress retention. However, *confab* and *math* (like many other conscious shortenings) have lost the syllables bearing primary stress in the words from which they developed. Such forms as these latter ones appear to be distinctly different from those like the childish *fessor* and *spression*. This difference, I believe, is due to the working of that great shaper of language, analogy. Sophisticated shortenings characteristically retain the first syllable(s) of their original form regardless of stress; this shortening pattern is based upon the shortening habits of all simple native English words. The first syllable of any Old English word without a prefix is invariably stressed; consequently, the first syllable is the one which is generally retained, although those following it may be weakened or lost. Our example *godum* (with the stressed first syllable) is typical of thousands of Old English forms: there, the accented syllable is retained in our Modern English *good* in the same fashion that the stressed syllable of *professor* is retained in *fessor*. The position of the stress is inconsequential in such developments. However, English-speaking people are accustomed to utter words in which the stress is initial as it is in *godan* and they have come to feel instinctively that the first syllable of *any* shortened form should be retained. When they wish to shorten a word intentionally, they create the clipped form analogically in accordance with the conventional pattern. For further examples and discussion, see Robertson and Cassidy, pp. 204-5, and the Jespersen treatment alluded to there.

Lapse imitations are an interesting study on their own right and may form the basis of separate assignments. In our investigation of error, however, they are merely an interesting side-road. When genuine catch-ons have been collected and catalogued by the students, the teacher can follow the movement of error into even wider circles of usage. He may do this by asking his students to collect mispronunciations and grammatical mistakes which are frequently encountered in sub-standard English; or, for variety, he may compile a list of such blunders himself and jot them on the board for class discussion. Forms of this kind are not the dialect property of a family, a residence hall or a particular high school: they have passed many dialect boundaries and in some cases stand hat-in-hand on the threshold of respectability. The student who has worked through the preceding lapse exercises will have little difficulty with the following forms and many others like them:[7]

ekscape (for "escape"). Here we have a very frequent error in pronunciation. The sound of *c* has been uttered before it should have been (Lapse Type I.A.1. Anticipation alone). As in the case of *window seal* discussed above, a second cause of lapse can be per-

ceived here; the *ks* sounds in the erroneous form may also be rendered orthographically by an *x*, hence *excape*. The lapse, therefore, strongly suggests that it is an analogic one (Type IV): if we say *explode, expand* and the like, the lapse asks us, why then shouldn't we say *excape*? The resultant form is a delightful one, for it literally sets the poor word back several thousand years. It restores the historically accurate Latin prefix *ex-* which had developed into *es-* in Norman French *escaper*, the form borrowed by the English.

e*k*cetera (for "et cetera"). This lapse is common, particularly in the speech of those who do not understand the Latin. An instance of Type III. Dissimilation; cp. *t* of *cetera*.

Febuary (for "February"). Of the lapses cited here, *Febuary* easily has the best chance to become standard usage; despite the efforts of English teachers this form is heard everywhere. Another example of Type III. Dissimilation; cp. the second *r*.

height*th* (for "height"). Analogy (Type IV) with *breadth*.

Where did you go *to*? (for "Where did you go?" and "What place did you go to?"). In this case, two clauses have been blended together; and example of Lapse Type V. Contamination. Such utterences (noted by Sturtevant) are particularly frequent in the speech of children.

To demonstrate the final stage in the progression from lapse to respectability, the teacher should provide his students with a list of lapses which have gained acceptance in standard English usage. Here, the possible examples are legion, but a very few must suffice.

mice (for "mouses"). See "History," p. 10 and n. 18, for a brief discussion of i-umlaut, a vastly significant variety of lapse; Type I.A. 2. Anticipation with substitution.

b*ird* (for Old English "bridd"), and **a*sk*** (from Old English "acsian"). Two examples of Type II. Metathesis.

h*elped* (for Old English "healp"/"hulpon"). The past tense of this and many other strong verbs have been made to conform to the familiar weak verb pattern; Type IV. Analogy.

pent*house* (misinterpretation of "pentus" or "pentis" from French "appentis"). In the pre-twentieth-century sense of "lean-to," this word was thought to be related to "house." Another instance of Popular Etymology (Type VI).

brunch (combination of "breakfast" and "lunch"). This useful word is an *imitation* of Lapse Type V. Contamination.

An examination of the etymologies in any collegiate dictionary, or a reading of Sturtevant, Robertson and Cassidy, etc., will provide hundreds of other instances of lapses which have made good in our language. By examining the boner background of contemporary speech, the student acquires a feeling for the dynamic changes which are constantly reshaping English. He learns to relate the speech heard by his ear to the speech heard by the ears

of men living a millennium before his own birth. He learns that language has its own life, and that it uses men as much as men use it. In fine, he puts language in a test tube and watches it react when warmed by the Bunsen burner of human blunder as he follows it through the following progression:

Individual error
Catch-on usage
Widespread usage
Standard usage

On each of these four levels, he has found the same lapse principles at work; he has seen error born on the tongue of the individual speaker and come to maturity in the accepted locutions of his textbooks. The only drawback to these exercises lies in the fact that they have a rather fatalistic cast: man likes to think that he wields some control over his language, that he consciously shapes it to his needs and aspirations. To some extent, man does control his language, and the study of lapse should never be allowed to conceal this fact from the student. Consequently, the preceding exercises should be assigned in conjunction with the coinage exercises which follow.

II. The Study of Intentional Innovations

Coinage exercises are easily set up and prove both amusing and informative. Through them, the teacher may demonstrate that change in language is frequently dominated by the human will and that the movement of language is not entirely a matter of chance and error. If he wishes, the teacher can follow through the classic progression from individual innovation, catch-on, and widespread usage to general acceptance; such a set of exercises would be identical with those plotted for the study of lapses with one fundamental difference; here, only intentional innovations are to be considered. In *History: the Life in Language,* pp. 16-17, I carried the hypothetical coinage *chookies* through these stages of development and shall not repeat myself here. After examining the case history of *chookies* and the methodology used in the lapse assignments, the interested teacher will be able to work out similar coinage exercises without difficulty. For variety of procedure I have used the following exercise, which enables the student to examine the forces which underscore the coining of new words and phrases.

First, the class discusses the latest social developments which bear upon their personal experience. On the basis of this discussion, the group decides upon some gap in their vocabulary which needs filling. It may be that a new dance step needs a name, or that

some development in hot-rod racing has outstripped the English language. At the other end of the cultural scale, a recent trend in science, politics, or diplomacy may call for new terminology. When teacher and students have decided upon one specific vocabulary gap, the class then coins a word to fill it. Coinages may be created in the following ways:[8]

1. A non-traditional combination of sounds is composed; e.g., *kodak, dacron.*
2. Traditional elements may be joined together in one of two ways: prefixes and suffixes may be joined to a basic root (*forward* [prefix *for-* plus *ward*], *truthfulness* [*truth* plus suffixes *-ful* and *-ness*]), or basic roots (or words) may be joined together (*baseball, white-collar worker*).
3. A lapse may be imitated; see above, pp. 33-34. An interesting group of lapse imitations are the *back-formations*: a word is "incorrectly" analyzed and the supposedly basic word element becomes a new word, frequently an amusing or bantering one; e.g., *buttle* from *butler* and *sculp* from *sculptor;* see the discussion of *undulating,* under Lapse Type IV. Analogy. Examples of intentional *functional shift* (e.g., the verb *to sandwich* from the noun), metathesis imitations (cf. *dumb bunny*) and copies of other blunder patterns are not infrequent.
4. A foreign word may be Anglicized; e.g. *beef* (from the French), *dinghy,* (*dingy* or *dingey*), a small boat (from the Bengali), *buffalo* (from the Portuguese or Italian). When a word is consciously adopted and adapted from a foreign language, such a *loanword* is best viewed as a kind of "English coinage."
5. A sound may be imitated; e.g., *zoom, meow, gong* (from the Javanese and/or Malay, but originally a coinage of this variety).
6. The initial letters of a group of words may be combined to form a new word; each letter may be pronounced individually (*CIO, GOP*) or together like a conventional word (*snafu*). Some (like *AWOL*) may be pronounced in either fashion. Coinages of this kind are called *acronyms.*
7. A group of sounds may be repeated with or without variation; e.g., *blow-blow* (campus slang for a noisy hair dryer); *killer-diller; ping-pong.*

Notice that Type 4 accounts for many of the words traditionally called *loanwords;* from the viewpoints of a given language, words consciously adopted from foreign sources have the force of coinages. On the other hand, some borrowed words have the force of lapses and represent contaminations of English utterances: a borrowing like *they* from the Old Norse was probably not intentional; the form probably "slipped" into the speech of Englishmen who lived side-by-side with Scandinavians in the Middle Ages (Lapse Type V. Contamination). One is also wise to keep in mind that many apparent coinages are simply semantic develop-

ments; thus, the word *Charleston* was not coined to provide a name for the uproarious dance of the 1920's; rather, the existing name of a city in South Carolina changed in meaning. On the other hand, the verb *to macadamize* is a genuine coinage, although it too is based upon a proper noun, the name of the engineer John McAdam; here, an existing word has been modified by the addition of a suffix (see 2 above).

When the class has carefully created its coinage and has mastered its definition, the students should then be instructed to introduce the word in their other classes and in their social circle as opportunity affords. After two weeks, they should be required to submit a written report on the success of their efforts. In this report, they should indicate how readily the coinage met acceptance and to what extent it was reject. They should also try to determine what kind of individuals were most willing to accept and use the coinage without challenge, and conversely, what types scorned it with the simple pronouncement that "There's no such word!" The results of this experiment are as unpredictable as life itself, and my materials are not yet sufficient to enable me to draw any scholarly conclusions. I would suppose, however, that a great number of case histories would demonstrate that the success of a coinage depends upon one or more of the following factors:[9]

1. *The usefulness of the coinage.* Obviously, if there is the need for a term in either a specialized vocabulary or in the general language, a coinage meeting that need has an excellent chance to gain acceptance. An avid bridge player in one of my classes (a gentleman old enough to know better) devised a new bridge term in the course of our coinage studies and introduced it in a circle of his fellow-addicts; as the coinage expressed some hitherto unnamed maneuver, it has an excellent chance to catch on in bridge circles. Many of the most successful coinages fill similar vocabulary blanks; consider *brunch, Van Allen Rings, Beat Generation.*
2. *The value of the coinage as a rejuvenator of dead verbiage.* Through overuse, words wear out and become colorless. Consequently, our more lively individuals and groups are constantly coining new words to revitalize their speech. Words denoting emotional and esthetic responses tend to be the most easily exhausted and are satisfying only to linguistic dullards; *good, bad, attractive, pretty, nice,* and *terrible* are familiar examples of the class. The underworld language of the high school corridor and the army barracks is laden with coinages designed to convey human responses with greater vividness than these tired words; a few examples must suffice: *disha* (campusese for "neat," "terrific"); *zorch* ("chic," "sharp," in good taste"; recorded in high school usage in California and Illinois); *fubar* (World War II acronym for "fouled up beyond all recognition").
3. *The symbolic value of the coinage as a social identifier.* The desire to band into a group has led mankind down two paths. When it has

caused man to pool his strengths, that desire has created civilization. When it has caused men to pool their weaknesses, it has produced the rabble, the mob, the snobbish elite, the herd of racial and religious bigots, bogus social and "intellectual" organizations, and, pathetically enough, the high school and college clique. Such groups as the latter appear to develop special words which identify the user as an insider; these dialect forms are difficult to distinguish from words in the preceding paragraph, for they are characteristically bright and possibly imaginative. They proclaim that the users "belong." On a larger scale, the population of an entire high school may develop such coinages to stress the unity of youth in an alien, adult society. Consider *bumb dunny,* the lapse imitation previously cited, part of a "complete" high school double-talk vocabulary; such a vocabulary is a trademark or a symbol. Consider also the double plurals like *bookses* which were used in a certain girls' residence hall. Were these not badges of membership? The study of this lapse factor is a subtle and difficult one; the linguist, however, must not ignore it for that reason.

4. *The value of the coinage as a means of ego gratification.* A coinage can identify members of a group, but it can also train the spotlight on individuals who are "in the know." The coiner of a new word or the person who introduces a coinage into his special group can give himself a mental pat on the back. Certain columnists make a fetish of such coinages; earnest young college English majors pick up the latest high-sounding terms of the "best" critics and pompously mouth them; a high school student visits a friend in another town and returns home with the latest slang to spring on his or her classmates. Such ego-boosting is so common that none of us have failed to practice it on occasion. A striking example of such activity was recorded by a student of mine in the course of a coinage exercise. One evening when she was dining with a group of her friends, this young lady worked a pre-arranged coinage into the conversation. A skeptic immediately asked her what the word meant; before she could reply, another girl at the table (with an undoubted feeling of superiority) attempted to define the word!
5. *The prestige of the coiner.* If the creator (or promoter) of a coinage is a highly respected individual, his prestige may be transferred to his linguistic off-spring. Probably, a given coinage will have better chances of success if it comes from his lips or pen than if it is the handiwork of an undistinguished or dull individual. When a Winston Churchill speaks, the English language listens; when Hiram Smith, the D-minus rhet student, comes off with a "good one," not even his mother pays any attention. It is the dynamic student leader who will coin the local *New Frontiers,* or *Iron Curtain;* and it is the corridor wit who will hold the students' *attention,* even if he has to create the word first as Chaucer apparently did. I have watched with amusement the triumphs of several "prestige figures" in my own classes, particularly those of a popular campus columnist, and an ordained minister.
6. *The size of the audience exposed to the coinage.* The campus columnist mentioned in the last paragraph planted a coined word one day in his column; I have no idea how many University of Illinois under-

> graduates happened to read the column that day, but five hundred would seem to be a conservative estimate. On the other hand, most coinages do not receive such a wide initial audience: the coiner may toss off his new word at a small social gathering, at the dinner table, or in the course of a private discussion with a single individual. Obviously, a few of the columnist's five hundred readers are likely to pick up a striking new term, at least temporarily; of these few, perhaps one or two will come to use it habitually and pass the coinages on to his friends. However, the odds against the adoption of a coinage heard by, let us say, a dozen people are great. The more ears and eyes that are exposed to a new word, the better its chances of success in the world. In the present era of rapid communication, the coinage of some prominent individual is flashed from coast to coast with incredible speed. Taking advantage of this accelerated word movement, the Madison Avenue "depth" men are bombarding the American citizenry with an array of coinages that are quite literally brainwashed into the general vocabulary (e.g., *auto-home, flip-top box, tired blood, filter blend*). At least, the introduction of such words illustrates the response of a large audience to frequently-repeated coinages.

In the discussion of the class coinage reports, the teacher should relate the students' findings to the factors sketched out briefly above. If the coinage has been an apt one, it may continue its career indefinitely in the speech of the school. To take note of any continued growth, the teacher may instruct the class to report on any occurrence of the term which is spotted throughout the rest of the semester. Even if the coinage does not catch on, however, the exercise illustrates ably how new words are born and how people respond to them. Ideally, it would be better if each student, as individual innovator, coined his one word and promoted its acceptance on his own; concerted group action, however, focuses the attention on a single linguistic experiment and enables the students to share and compare their coinage experiences. Also, group action approximates the conditions of mass communication; it causes the coinage to be broadcast extensively and often, and will probably yield more interesting results. When the reports have been submitted and discussed, the teacher can spot those students who have acquired a historical sense by asking a simple question: "Doesn't our group coinage prove conclusively that linguistic change need not be inaugurated by an individual?" If there is a budding Karl Luick in the class, he will quickly point that the "group" hasn't coined anything: it was Hetty Jones in the third row who concocted the coinage which the group *accepted* because it seemed useful (Factor 1) or vivid (Factor 2), or because half the boys in the class have a crush on Hetty and hang on her every word (Factor 5); he might well add that Pamela Green and Theophilus Johnson probably spoke out on

behalf of the coinage because the word sounded too difficult for most of their friends to understand and would enable them to show off their superior learning (Factor 4). Also, the analyst should not forget little Sally Saucer who sits in the middle seat of the middle row. With happy tears in her eyes little Sally voted for the coinage which the class as a group seemed to like so well; she likes to "share things" with people; that always makes her feel she "really belongs." Sally is suffering from an advanced case of Factor 3. So much then for "group coinage."

In concluding this section of the paper, let me caution the teacher never to permit useless and vapid coinages to be used for experimental purposes. Of all people the language historian should never contribute to the existing stock of verbal deadwood. The teacher should, moreover, always see to it that his students approach the coinage assignment in the right spirit. The study of coinage is a thoroughly enjoyable pursuit, but it should not be handled as a practical joke on unwary "subjects." Its purpose is not to make fools of acquaintances, but rather to understand them linguistically. If anyone asks a student about the class coinage, the student should freely admit the word in question is an innovation. It is probably wise, however, to disassociate the English teacher himself from the experiment. His prestige, or lack of prestige, will undoubtedly influence the potential user of the coined word.

For more far-ranging study in the coinage field, the teacher may ask the class to examine the coinages which grew out of some cultural or scientific development in the past: the rebirth of Classical learning in the Rennaissance, the invention of the airplane, the rise of jazz or any of a hundred other topics may be used. The coinages generated by such developments will be largely of the utilitarian variety, but are frequently very vivid for all that. Consider, for example, such airplane coinages as *tailspin, to zero in, to hedgehop, powerdive,* and *ack-ack.* It is also interesting to examine coinages specificially designed to rejuvenate the mother tongue. To accomplish this, ask the class to submit lists of the slang coinages used by their own social group and then compare these coinages with those used by students in the past; glossaries of hoary college slang are cited in Mencken's *American Language,* p. 569, n. 2, and its second supplement, p. 712, n. 2. See also pp. 172-202 of Maurice H. Weseen, *A Dictionary of American Slang* (New York, 1934). For other assignments, Baugh's *History,* Robertson and Cassidy, and the historical

dictionaries will provide much material on coinages and offer many suggestions.

III. The Study of Semantic Change

The first two sections of this paper have dealt with the "outside" of language, its sounds and forms and its word-stock. In the present section, we shall deal with the meanings of words, the science of semantics. The nature of meaning is one of the most exacting and subtle of researches, and yet one of the most important subjects which a young mind can investigate. The boy or girl who understands only semantics is better equipped to deal with this world than the young person who knows only physics or chemistry or mathematics. The historical linguist, however, its not concerned directly with the ramifications of this all-important subject. He devotes his attention to one special area of semantic study, the complex phenomena of semantic change, the never-ending development of word meanings.

The study of semantic change in our own language has been greatly simplified by the publication of the OED, the AED and the DA, which trace the meanings of a given word in its historical sequence. With such lexicographical aids, the teacher may devise numerous exercises without the slightest difficulty. To make the student's work meaningful, however, the teacher must provide his students with an outline analysis of semantic change, and must explain and illustrate each variety of change in the classroom. The following outline embodies the traditional treatment of the subject. Similar presentations will be found in Potter, Greenough and Kittredge, Robertson and Cassidy, and Hixson and Colodny. Many of my illustrations are taken from these works.

Kinds of Semantic Change

1. *Generalization.* The meaning of a word moves from the special to the general.
   - *dog*: originally "a canine of ancient breed," but now "any canine."
   - *manuscript*: originally "a hand-written copy," but now "a non-printed copy, either hand-written or typed."
2. *Specialization.* The meaning of a word moves from the general to the special, the particular.
   - *starve*: originally "to die," but now "to die from hunger."
   - *girl*: originally "a young male or female" (Middle English), but now "a young female."
3. *Degradation.* The meaning of a word is debased and deprived of its former dignity.
   - *dame*: originally "a woman of station," but now a flippant, disrespectful epithet for a woman.
   - *lust*: originally "pleasure," but now "taboo physical passion."

4. *Elevation.* The meaning of a word is raised in dignity.
   minister: originally "a servant," but now "a clergyman" or "a high government official."
   bum: generally "a (drunken) loafer," but a term of endearment in Brooklyn when *dem Bums* "was" playing at Ebbett's Field.
5. *Concretization.* The meaning of a word moves from abstract to concrete.
   honor: originally "esteem paid to worth," etc., but now also "a judge" (his Honor).
   fastness: first recorded in Old English in the sense "the state of being firmly fixed," but about a century later it had gained the meaning "fortress, stronghold."
6. *Abstraction.* The meaning of a word moves from concrete to abstract.
   heart: originally "an organ of the body," but now also "courage, fortitude." (Cp. the song "You've Got to Have Heart.")
   lemon, false alarm, blank cartridge: in addition to their usual meanings, these words are slang expressions for "disappointment."
7. *Radiation.* A number of independent meanings develop or radiate from one central meaning of a word.
   head: originally "the top part of the human body containing the brain," but from this sense have radiated out many distinctive meanings; some of these are the following: "the side of a coin bearing the representation of a head;" "an individual" (usually in the plural: a hundred head of cattle); "the upper end of something" (the head of a bed); "a director or leader" (the head of the department); "the foam on a glass of beer;" "the membranal striking surface of a drum;" "a toilet" (Navy lingo). Other meanings could easily be added to the list; most of them signify "that which is at the top."
8. *Euphemism.* A word of neutral meaning comes to signify an idea which is too unpleasant, vulgar, or shocking for direct statement.
   to pass away: the self-explanatory merged verb has come to mean "to die."
   to make love: this romantic idiom has come to mean "to have sexual relations."
9. *Hyperbole.* The meaning of a word is weakened by the extravagant application of the word to an object which is unworthy of it.
   magnificient: originally "splendid, exalted, noble," but of little force now as it is applied to everything from a necktie to a good two-iron shot in golf.
   glorious: once this word suggested "that which is supremely praiseworthy, resplendent;" now it suggests very little indeed; "a glorious time" may refer simply to a fairly pleasant experience, and a "glorious suntan" may indicate nothing more than "a somewhat discolored back which doesn't peel."
10. *Popular Etymology.* An erroneous analysis of the word leads to a

shift in its meaning. Compare Lapse Type VI., where such analysis leads to a change in form.

pantry: this Old French borrowing has as its basic element the word *pain*, "bread," from Latin *panis*. Most people would relate the word to the native English *pan* and consider a *pantry* a place where pans (not bread) are stored.

penthouse: discussed above as a lapse and repeated here to illustrate the fact that popular etymology can change meaning and form simultaneously.

11. *Transference.* The meaning of a word can shift from subject to object or *vice versa.*

curious: this adjective was originally applied to a person (subject), i.e., "a curious (inquisitive) person," but it came to be applied to objects; Shakespeare uses the word in its transferred sense in "a curious (care-demanding) business" and in "a curious (elaborately wrought) tale." Today the transferred meaning of the word perhaps approximates "strange;" "a curious tale or business" means a "strange, inexplicable or mysterious" one.

straightforward: in contrast to *curious*, this adjective originally applied to an object, i.e., "straightforward (direct) language," and was transferred to a subject: "a straightforward (frank, direct) person."

This conventional presentation of semantic change is convenient, if not absolutely satisfactory. When the outline fails the teacher, he should not try to force a given development into one of the categories presented above. He should simply explain that the outline catalogues many changes in word meaning, but that it cannot explain them all. I am convinced that, in time, a better analysis of semantic change can be worked out. To a great extent, semantic change is metaphorical and the ultimate scheme of its permutations will have to deal directly with figurative expression. The suds floating on a glass of beer is like the head of a man; the handwritten copy of Virgil is like the typed draft of a Graham Greene novel; the heart, an organ, symbolizes a quality in man. The mind is constantly groping for fresh associations as it modifies the meanings of words. Semantic change is mankind's way of being a poet, the transformation of everyday communication into art. It is a vivid reminder that while facts may be eternal, man's imaginative perception of facts is temporal and always changing. Ideally, then, an ideal analysis of semantic change will mirror the imaginative, poetic impulses which underly so much of meaning development.

In teaching this area of linguistic history, the teacher should again stress the importance of the individual. Meaning is a much more elusive entity than form or sound, but it is changed by the convolutions of the solitary human mind. When a single intellect plants new meaning in a group of sounds, that meaning may travel

through ever-broadening social rings like a coinage or a lapse. Using the outline as a general guide, the teacher may ask his students to examine semantic change as it passes through various stages from innovation to general usage. For variety, attention may be focused on the semantic activity of particular persons, fields of activity or groups. Here are a few such semantic hunting-grounds arranged according to growth stage:

1. *Individual innovation.*

   The speech of a given child provides many instances of semantic change, notably of type 1. Generalization: *dad* may mean "any man" and *dog* may signify "any animal."

   The language of a given poem is a mine of semantic developments, that is, if the poem has any genuine literary merit. Skillful poets frequently alter the meanings of words by placing them in carefully prepared verse contexts. No dictionary can tell the reader precisely what these words mean in various poems by W. B. Yeats: *swan, gyre, tower, roar,* or the name *Leda.* Other recent poets whose work displays great semantic richness are Father Hopkins, T. S. Eliot, e. e. cummings, and Wallace Stevens. If less complex poets are more in keeping with the literary background of the class, simpler works will provide ample material. As suggested above, there is an intimate bond between metaphor and semantic change. If a poet writes "My love is a lichen," he has modified the meaning of both *love* and *lichen.* While the critic may say that the poet has here "created an image," the linguist may observe with greater accuracy that the writer has engaged in semantic manipulation.

2. *Catch-on usage.*

   The slang of a given high school or college clique is rife with semantic innovations as well as with coinages. One amusing example submitted by one of my students may stand for them all, the use of the term *All Star* to signify an undesirable male date. Originally, the compound modified object-nouns: "an all-star movie production," "an all-star football game." The term then came to signify "a person who plays in an all star game." ("Joe Clunk was an *all-star* back in 1949.") In this sense, *an all star* has probably taken on the connotations of manliness, stout-hearted American vigor, and heroism. As used by a coed to mean "a masculine wash-out," the word has fallen on its semantic face; a delightful example of Semantic Change Type 3. Degradation.

   The language of a given family offers many instances of semantic development. Names of food, family activities, relatives, etc., will yield material if studied carefully. For instance, *a ride or a drive,* "an automobile outing," may mean something else to Mom and the kids when Dad says, "Let's all go for a ride this afternoon." To them, it may mean "a ride down those dull backroads which Dad insists on driving down." (Semantic Change Type 3. Degradation). The verb *to tidy up* probably has a different meaning in every family, a meaning which depends upon Mom's standards of domestic cleanliness. In the sentence "I make soup for dinner tonight," *soup* often has a specialized meaning (Type 2); it perhaps signifies "the same old lean soup that I've been dishing up for the last twenty years." Euphemisms (Type 5) for toilet terms are as varied as they are, shall we say, vivid.

3. *Widespread usage.*

The shop-talk or technical vocabulary of a craft or profession will provide the student with semantic developments which have become fixed in the language of large groups of people. The possible areas of investigation include plumbing, carpentry, printing, banking, the law, fashion designing, and even "the art and sullen craft" of poetry, which has its own technical vocabulary. Trade magazines are helpful in such work, but "field trips" to shop and office are even more valuable. Students should not be encouraged in the belief that English research can be done only in the library. It is interesting to observe that a given word may undergo semantic development in two or more separate activities: *panel*, for instance, means one thing in the shop-talk of an aviator, another thing in the vocabulary of a photographer, and still another in the terminology of a dressmaker. Similarly, if a geologist, a gymnast, and an underworld hoodlum were to hold a symposium on their venerable professions, the word *dip* causes some confusion as each has endowed it with a specialized meaning. The two words cited are typical of the numerous common English words which have changed semantically through contact "men at work."[10]

The dialect of a given locale offers a greater challenge to the student of semantics, but is very rewarding. The dialect area should be kept small, the county or region of the state in which the students live. They may be asked to search for fairly common words which have distinctive meanings in the area specified. Examples: *to look* means "to stem" ("to look the berries") in Jackson County, Illinois; *nurse*, noun, occasionally means "mother's milk" in the Ozarks of southwestern Missouri and northwestern Arkansas; in parts of West Virginia, *fruit* may mean "applesauce." Wentworth's dialect dictionary offers many instances of such developments.

4. *General usage.*

Words selected at random from standard speech, newspapers, magazines, etc., may be examined in the light of their semantic histories. These histories may be worked out easily through reference to the OED, the DAE and the DA. I shall purposely refrain from making specific suggestions; half the delight of semantic study lies in hitting upon the strange gyrations of meaning on one's own. An old teacher of mine loved to speak of "the antics of semantics" and his phrase is an apt one indeed.

The semantics of a popular activity may be spotlighted. General developments in meaning may be profitably approached through a study of the "great American pastimes"—golfing, politicking, missile-racing, club-joining, drinking, *et al.* Any activity of general popularity will suffice. When examined from a semantic point of view, such an activity will provide many distinctive meaning developments. For instance, politicking exhibits countless semantic changes. *Lincoln*, "the name of the Civil War president of the United States," means in political speeches "the inherent glory of the Republican Party." On the other hand, Jefferson, "the name of an early American, thinker, statesman, inventor, and architect," means in rival political speeches "the sanctity of the Democrats." (Both perversions exemplify Semantic Change Type I, Generalization; they suggest that every Republican is a Lincoln and that every Democrat is a Jefferson.) In some instances, politicos of both parties agree semantically. As the words roll from their silvery tongues, *The American Way*, *Freedom*,

and *Liberty* mean merely "what you'll get if you vote for me." (Instances of Type 9. Hyperbole.)

In this series of assignments, notice that we have come full cycle: the little child who calls every man *Dad* is semantically identical with those who call every man *Jefferson* or *Lincoln*. The difference lies in the fact that the child is an individual, while the proponents of the political developments are legion. Semantic change, then, moves in ever-widening circles like change in sound or form, but it is more subtle than either, for it exists in the human mind and leaves no tangible sign. It is the most subtle because it is the fundamental feature of language. Millennia ago, man discovered the certain sounds which he made had meaning; if he had never gone on to build a skyscraper or concoct an atomic bomb, he would have proclaimed himself a man by this one conscious discovery. After his creation of semantics, he discovered that semantically oriented groups of sounds (words) could be related to one another, and thereby he invented grammar. Finally, he discovered that grammatically organized words possessed power and beauty; thus he created literature. The great language families and the great treasures of poetry and prose which man has shaped since those early times are complex and awe-inspiring, but they are no more eloquent than the miraculous joining of sound and sense which was their beginning.

In conducting the exercises, the teacher may parcel out individual projects to individual students; for instance, in the study of semantic change at the usage level, a different craft or profession might be assigned to each student who would then conduct a personal investigation. Frankly, I believe that a group project is bound to be more profitable than such piecemeal work. A teacher's job, granted, is to develop the individual personality and abilities of each young person entrusted to his care; however, a class—a group of young individualists—is not merely an educational convenience. Our class system is dedicated to the proposition that students can teach each other. I prefer, therefore, assignments which promote the pooling and interchange of information in the classroom. I suggest that all of the students in the class focus attention on a given occupation, and that they use the class as a gathering house for their individual efforts. If the data each acquires is written on those ever-faithful 4 x 6 scratch pad slips, a class file may be kept and if this "scratch dictionary" covers the semantics of an unusual or inadequately explored area in our vocabulary, there is no reason why it shouldn't be composed into a formal glossary and submitted to *Word Study*, *American Speech*, or some

other worthy publication. The teacher or one of the better writers in the class may add a preface explaining that the materials for the work were gathered by the members of the class specified. My own students always respond best to an experiment when I suggest that their researches may make an original and publishable contribution to our knowledge of language. Such group projects are nicely balanced by those which are almost necessarily individual enterprises, the study of the semantics of a single family, for example.

IV. The Linguistic Impact of History

In the previous exercises, we have considered dominant ways in which language changes. With the principles set forth, the teacher and his students should be able to meet any specific historical development, any change in form, sound or meaning. If the various categories and classifications fail to yield a perfect description of some specific change, the investigator should be charitable in his criticism; no one will ever claim to provide an infallible analysis of linguistic change. I hope, however, that the great majority of the problems which the investigator will encounter have been dealt with either directly or by implication in the foregoing pages. In any event, the reader should be ready at this point to bring all the preceding data to bear upon a given historical event in the biography of our mother tongue. He should be prepared now to view English at a particular moment in its history and to observe the varied forces which move it onward.

To observe the interplay of language and history, the teacher will be wise to introduce his class to the era in which they live. The following procedure suggests one way to do this.

During the course of the semester, the teacher watches the social and political news carefully in search of an event which will capture the imagination of the country. As language is a reflex of events, such an occurrence—a catastrophe, a scientific discovery, a diplomatic crisis, a national election—will start tongues wagging at once. When the teacher has spotted the history-making event he has been searching for, he sends his young linguists into the field armed as usual with their trusty 4 x 6 pads to record the vocabulary of history. The students should be instructed to devour newspapers, magazines, conversations, signs, radio and television programs, and any other sources of current language at their disposal. Wherever new words are being generated, they should poke their philological noses, collecting and recording data. After a specified period of time, two weeks to a month, they should submit their data slips, along with any relevant newspaper clippings which

they have accumulated. The assembled material is then sifted, discussed and analyzed by the class.

During the past few years, I have used this exercise with what I consider great success. In this span, two events overshadowed all rivals as language generators, one tragic and one comic, though both seemed rather tragic at the time. These horrendous events were the orbiting of the Sputnik satellite by the Russians, (October 4, 1957), and the launching of the sack dress by certain infamous Parisian designers (spring, 1958). Both events hit America where it lived. For the time, Sputnik undermined the Yankee's pride in his technological know-how, while Dior and fellow conspirators completed the demoralization of the land by proclaiming that the Form Divine would no longer exist—that, after all, Venus di Milo *was* shaped like a silo. As these historic happenings unleashed their diabolic energies on the American public, my students recorded two new chapters in the saga of American English. To deal adequately with either body of data is impossible here; of the two, the Sputnik data is the more significant and far-reaching. This data will merge with the larger linguistic chapter dealing with space-age English—a chapter which is just beginning. The following list includes some of the most characteristic and revealing of the Sputnik words recorded by my students:

Portrait of the Language as a Young Satellite

1. *Sputnik words*

   a. Nouns with the suffix *-nik* referring to satellites.
   Bottlenik (news magazine pun on *bottleneck;* the awaited U. S. satellite)
   Mutnik (dog-bearing satellite; general usage)
   Sudsnik (hoax satellite made from washing machine tub; national photo service caption)
   Planetnik, Whatnik (newspaper names for the Russian satellite)

   b. Nouns with *-nik* referring to other objects and concepts.
   Pumpnik ("Halloween jack-o-lantern" alluded to in a Chicago newspaper)
   Stompnik ("a dance or informal party" advertised in a sign on a bulletin board)
   Whatnik ("name of future church program at University Baptist Student Foundation;" cp. the same word in the section above.)
   Talknik (conference of Kruschev and Mao; campus newspaper headline.)

   c. *Sputnik* as a verb.
   I. "to surpass," "to beat"
   "If we don't watch out Russia will sputnik us in education."
   (Teacher in a college class)
   "sputniked" ("bested by someone else")

II. "to reach preeminence"
"He sputniked to the top of his field." (Conversation)
"Russia sputniked its way into the lead [in the missle race]." (Newspaper)

III. "to move like a sputnik"
"I kept sputniking around." ("whirling around"; used by a college girl)
"In a few years we will all 'sputnik' from place to place." (Newspaper letter)

d. *Sputnik* as an adjective.
sputnik flu (Used in a newsreel "in reference to the new vigor of some American test pilots.")
Sputnik Sundae (An "out-of-this-world" concoction according to a drugstore sign.)

The few words listed above can only suggest the impact of a single word, *Sputnik*, upon our language: the effect of the satellite's launching reached far beyond such limitations. Sputnik made Americans space conscious; man-made moons, rocketry, space exploration became the topics of everyday conversation. It will be twenty or thirty years before we can look objectively at our new space language and assess its contribution to the hard core of English. When we do so, we shall find that the Sputnik affair has a significant place in the gallery of language-making events.[11]

The "Sack Look," on the other hand, will probably occupy no such position. As this fashion is already a lost cause and a dead issue, the student may view its verbal activities with the eye of history. Like many another chapter in the saga of English, the story of the sack is an amusing one and may serve as a healthy contrast to more solemn areas of investigation. A sense of humor is essential equipment for all who would consider themselves language historians. English is very much like Maggie in *What Every Woman Knows:* anyone who has ever loved her has had to laugh at her first. She is an absurd and delightful lady, this language; one minute she is humming the melodies of a Shakespeare; the next, she is uttering the grave thoughts of a Locke. But when we think we have finally come to understand her, she bounces in, clad in a chemise and does a pratfall or two to destroy our cherished illusions. If one would know the English language, he must come to enjoy her pratfalls as well as her beauty and her wisdom. Here, then, are a few examples of one of her many comic interludes.

Abridged Dictionary of Applied Sackology

1. *Chemise*, noun. French borrowing. A loose, unbelted dress which transforms the female form into a not-very-classical column.
a. Adjectives formed from *chemise*.

chemisable ("a moderately chemisable figure")
chemisey (recorded by four collectors)

b. Other nouns based on *chemise.*
chemiserie (accessories to be worn with the *chemise*)
chemiseness (apparently "the state of being [like] a *chemise*")
chemisette ("a modified *chemise*")
che-moo (The coinage of a [male] college student: "It's not *chemise;* it's *che-moo* for *shmoos* . . . " This inspired form is either an imitation of Lapse Type VI, Popular etymology, or of V, Contamination [a blend of *chemise* and *shmoo*].)

c. *Chemise* as a verb; two occurrences of this verb reveal semantic differerences: "I've been had ought to be replaced with I've been *chemised.*" " . . . effort *to chemise* the country is comparable only to the world communist movement." Both quotations are from the *Chicago Tribune,* which seems to have brooded on the fashion.

d. *Chemise* as part of the formal conclusion of a letter. An epistle in our campus paper was signed "Yours in a *Chemise.*" This conclusion does not seem to have threatened the supremacy of "Yours truly," "Yours sincerely," and "Lots of love."

2. *Diorization,* noun. The word, the meaning of which is self-explanatory, illustrates how easily a proper noun may be transformed into a common one.

3. *Sack,* noun. Synonymous with *Chemise.*
Sack as a verb: "I expressly forbade my wife to *sack* it along with the other girls this year." (From a newspaper.) Also, a distinctive merged verb was formed by combining *sack* with the preposition/adverb *out;* the resultant verb appears as a participial adjective in the newspaper description of a woman who "walked down the stairs all *sacked-out.*"

4. *Skiddoo,* noun. A night garment. This name suggests the Roaring Twenties background of the sack and its off-spring: *cp.* the familiar imperative *Twenty-three skiddoo* which is associated with that period. A mere linguist is unable to determine whether or not the *skiddoo* is identical to a *shimmy doll outfit.* The association of *shimmy* and the *chemise* movement is linguistically appropriate, however, for *shimmy* is a colloquial pronunciation of *chemise.* The semantic developments of the word have been curious: the anti-arthritic dance which now is called the *shimmy* gained its name because, to do it artistically, a girl had to shake her *shimmy.*

Now that the reader has started thinking once more about the bad old days of the tubular silhouette, he will be able to add numerous other sackological developments to those few cited above. If the major newspapers of the country were studied systematically, the issues of the Sack Period would probably yield literally thousands of interesting coinages and semantic modifications. Campus and national magazines would yield still more, as would fashion magazines and catalogues. A large-scale study of the sack as linguistic history would be a colossal undertaking, but even a limited investigation is rewarding.

The sack vocabulary undoubtedly will have only a slight effect on the language of the future, but it is significant historically, for it belongs to a specific time and to a specific group of people, namely ourselves. And it perhaps tells us more about our age than we would like to admit. Like the Roaring-Twenties parties and festivals of the contemporary campus, the sack look is a glance back at a decade which seems better and happier than our own. Such wistfulness is not unusual in history. Just as we look back fondly at the Twenties, for example, people of Tudor England looked back at ancient civilization and found in it values and ideals which changed their way of looking at their world. The result was what we feebly call the Renaissance, a period in which the English language reflected the renewed vitality of the human mind. By comparison, the Flapper Renaissance of the Fifties is a pitiful extravaganza; yet it has meaning for the historical linguist. Contemporary men, he realizes, live in a regimented world, a world of committees and "social norms" and togetherness. In their hearts, they rebel at this regimentation as much as the Renaissance scientist rebelled at the regimentation of Aristotelianism. For them, the Twenties have become a symbol not of a "lost generation," but of a lost ideal; it symbolizes spontaneity and willfulness and the abandonment of rules which restrain the individual. It matters little what the Twenties were really like. Today, it is the dream-era of the drunken eunuch Jake Barnes and the high-living bootlegger Jay Gatsby, mythological figures who tower with a strange heroism over the organization men, the joiners, the sad souls who settle in the suburbs.

Some readers may be asking themselves if the last paragraph has a place in a linguistics paper. Is it the task of the language historian to consider the social and personal aspirations of an era? Is it not his job merely to analyze words themselves? To these questions there is a very simple answer: the historical linguist is a student of words spoken by people. If he divorces those words from the people who speak them—if he finds in language nothing more than a set of sounds to be described and a set of inflections to be catalogued—then he is an erudite sham. The genuine historical linguist seeks insight into man through words and insight into words through man. The high school or college teacher who can endow a group of young minds with these twin insights is a finer linguist than the specialist who can produce only devitalized tracts. By such study as I have attempted to sketch out here, students come to know how intimately bound up language is with the

aspirations, achievements and fears of an era. They can watch language respond to the forces which challenge men's minds or mirror their attitudes.

When the class has gained an historical sense by contemplating the linguistic activity of its own age, it is ready to examine the sack fads and sputniks of the past. Here are a few such events which have made linguistic history:

1. Germanic tribes trade with the Romans.
2. Monastic reform sweeps through Old England.
3. Scandanavian pirates raid, then settle in England.
4. French become the language of English highbrows. (Middle English period)
5. Columbus discovers America and the New World is explored.
6. Modern warfare is born in Virginia and Tennessee. (Civil War period)
7. Baseball becomes an American passion.
8. Prohibition (and the Speakeasy) come into existence.
9. The Atomic Age begins.
10. Men are denounced as *Lollards, Papists* and *Reds* in the fourteenth, seventeenth and twentieth centuries respectively.

By using Baugh, Mencken, the historical dictionaries, and a little imagination, the teacher can make these events as vivid as the genesis of yesterday's slang. Newspaper files in the town library may be used in the study of the more recent of these happenings; also, where possible, the student should be encouraged to talk to people who have experienced the event being analyzed; grandpa's recollections of the early days of radio are excellent source material, for instance. (Possibly the same gentleman also recollects certain pieces of philological data relevant to the study of speakeasy-cocktail terminology.) Man learned to speak long before he learned to write, and the mouth is still the great font of language.

* * *

Let us suppose that a gifted teacher takes my four sets of exercises, makes them his own, improves upon them, and uses them successfully in the classroom. Precisely what will he have accomplished in the infinite scheme of education? Certainly, he will not have created a roomful of polished writers overnight, for there is little practical value in the contemplation of metathesis lapses and outlandish dresses. All that the students will have learned is to look at language with the eye of history. All they will have gained from this knowledge is that love of language for its own sake, which once in a great while produces a character

like Falstaff, a poem like *Paradise Lost*, a novel like *Huckleberry Finn*, or a conversationalist like Sam Johnson. More often, that love of language merely produces in time, a civilized human being who can read and write. Historical linguistics does not tell the individual what he *must* do if he is to use good English. It reveals to him what he *can* do with English if he respects it and takes delight in it. The only command it utters is a far cry from the usual rules and prescriptions. Language is alive, it tells the student, and you must keep it alive. To understand the history of our language, the student must begin with the individual; to preserve that history, he must begin in the same place. To each individual who speaks and writes English, a portion of its life has been entrusted. If that individual fails in his trust, he destroys the language of the past and despoils the language of the future. In language, there is no such thing as a "personal" failure; there is only the failure which drags down the heritage of others. Language history, however, does not dwell upon the fear of failure, but upon the allurements of success; it portrays our speech as a responsive personality who accompanies man on his tragi-comic wanderings through time, a friend who is his music and his muse, who is his memory while he lives and his memorial when he dies. The young student who can respond to language as language responds to him may not have learned his English yet, but he has come to know her, and he will want to know her better. Each day he will find her history one day longer, one day more fascinating. But he must be warned that if he studies her long enough and passionately enough, this Cleopatra of sounds will bewitch him forever. One man who was thus bewitched might well have been thinking of the English language when he said of the lesser temptress that

> Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
> Her infinite variety: other women cloy
> The appetites they feed; but she makes hungry
> Where most she satisfies.[12]

Notes

1. "History: the Life in Language," *Illinois English Bulletin*, XLVII, 8 (May, 1960). Hereafter referred to as "History."

2. The present attempt to collect and analyze the work of many semesters has caused me to modify some of my actual experiments and to elaborate on others. I have not yet subjected any single group of students to the full sequence of exercises which follow.

3. The following abbreviations are employed throughout: OED (*Oxford English Dictionary* also called the *New English Dictionary*): DAE

(*Dictionary of American English*); DA (*Mathew's Dictionary of Americanisms*). For full titles, see "History," p. 23.

4. "History," pp. 10-16, sets forth six forces which stimulate linguistic change (Part 4, sections a-f). Of these six forces, *b* (the nature of sounds) and *c* (the personality of the language) seem too complex for student exercise work and have not been treated in this paper. As stated above, limitations of space do not permit the inclusion of loanword exercises, but *d* (the impact of external linguistic groups) is a factor in the Sputnik and Sack vocabularies discussed above, pp. 49 ff. The other forces are dealt with explicitly in the exercises: Part I, the study of lapses, concerns *d* (error); Part II, the study of coinages, deals with *a* (the desire to innovate); Part III, the study of semantic change, discusses intentional and unintentional meaning developments together for the sake of clarity; finally, Part IV deals with *e* (the impact of events). While they violate the order of presentation in "History," the exercises have been placed in the sequence which seems best suited to classroom presentation.

5. When the work of a linguist is cited only by the author's name, that work is cited in full either in the "History" bibliography, pp. 22-23, or in the supplementary bibliography at the end of the present paper. As a further space-saver, I have not attempted to cite the authorities from whose pages I have derived many of my illustrative forms; to have included these citations would have greatly increased the bulk of this already-too-long issue of the *Bulletin*. Many of the words discussed are examined in one or more of the works cited in the bibliography, and may be studied there without difficulty if the word indices are consulted. Many other words are taken from my files of student exercises. Finally, many others were found through my own independent researches. My only important research aids which have not been listed in the two bibliographies are the familiar and ever-faithful collegiate dictionaries.

6. The following outline does not exhaust the possibilities of speech error: allophonic drift is not touched upon at all; see the discussion of *sweet*, "History," p. 12. Such rarified subjects demand specialized knowledge beyond the ken of the young student. Even the learned specialists find it difficult to explain phenomena like the Grimm's Law sound changes.— In the lapse examples cited here, suggestive spellings have been employed to indicate erroneous utterances; phonetic symbols would have been much more satisfactory from a scientific point of view, but some concessions must be made to the background of the student here. Ideally, every student of English should be taught the IPA symbols and should be able to use them in his class work; see Section V of the "History" bibliography, p. 23.

7. Most of the following were erroneously submitted by my students as individual lapses. The teacher should point out the difference between these common locutions and the speech blunder of a single person.

8. An excellent discussion of coinages will be found in Chapter 8 of Robertson and Cassidy, pp. 185 ff. A useful outline of the subject is presented in R. C. Simonini, Jr., "Etymological Categories of Present-Day English and Their Productivity," *Language Learning*, IX (1959), 1-5. I am indebted to both of these treatments, and have derived a few of my examples from them.

9. The following outline might have been arranged in such a way that it would indicate why coinages are created in the first place: to fill a gap

in the vocabulary, to rejuvenate the language, to satisfy the coiner's ego, etc. However, I have focused the presentation upon the acceptance of coinages, for that is the specific subject of the exercise.

10. To an aviator, the *panel* is the instrument board in his cockpit. *Dip* is an underworld name for a pickpocket. The other professional meanings of the two words are to be found in *Webster's Collgeiate*.

11. For other sputnikisms, see Arthur Minton, "Sputnik and Some of Its Offshootniks," *Names*, VI (1958), 112-17.

12. I wish to extend my thanks to John A. Hamilton and Daniel Dungan of the University of Illinois for their helpful advice in the writing of this paper. Mr. Dungan very kindly permitted me to study the exercises which he formulated for his freshman rhetoric classes and Mr. Hamilton came to my aid in a hundred crises. No individual, however, has been more encouraging or more helpful in the present undertaking than Professor R. C. Simonini, Jr., of Longwood College, Virginia; his publications and his own language exercises have been invaluable. My greatest debt of gratitude, of course, is owed to my students. The data quoted from their classroom projects can not begin to suggest their contribution to this paper. If it had not been for their responsiveness and their intelligent delight in language, I could never have pursued such projects as I have outlined here. It is pleasant to think that many of these fine young people are already standing in front of their own classrooms; I know that they will bring the language to life for their own students as they have brought it to life for their former teacher.

For Further Reading and Study

For those who wish to delve more extensively into the scholarship of historical linguistics than the introductory bibliography, "History," pp. 22-23, permits, I recommend the following works. Most of them will be particularly useful to those teachers who wish to devise exercises for their own classes or who hope to develop their linguistic background through independent study.

I. Periodicals. Those which I consider particularly helpful are the following:

American Speech (The pages of this quarterly contain many interesting and frequently delightful articles on historical subjects. Every English teacher should read this journal religiously.)

PMLA (The May issue each year contains a bibliography of recent publications in the field of English linguistics; see the appropriate section under the general heading "English Language and Literature." Many fascinating leads may be picked up here.)

Word Study (An occasional publication of the G. & C. Merriam Company; contains much interesting wordlore.)

II. Medieval English. If the reader is tempted to taste the delights of the older forms of our language, the following treatments may be of assistance:

Davis, Norman, *Sweet's Anglo-Saxon Primer*, Oxford, 9th ed., 1953. (An admirable brief survey of Old English grammar and syntax,

together with elementary reading selections, notes, and glossary.)

Moore, Samuel, and Thomas A. Knott, *The Elements of Old English,* rev. by James R. Hulbert, Ann Arbor, 10th ed., 1955. (For those who prefer their grammar broken down into a series of lessons; in addition to the lessons proper, the volume contains a convenient reference grammar and extensive reading selections. Syntax is not discussed.)

Mossé, Fernand, *A Handbook of Middle English,* trans. by James A. Walker, Baltimore, 1952. (The best introductory presentation of Middle English, though somewhat detailed; syntax is ably discussed and the reading selections, notes and glossary are first-rate. Before tackling this handbook, the beginner might read and study the chapter on Chaucer's language in Moore and Marckwardt, "History" bibliography, Section II. A reading of Chaucer himself is an excellent introduction to the language of his period.)

III. American English. The following offer more detailed examinations of our language than the two books cited in the "History" bibliography:

Krapp, George P., *The English Language in America,* 2 vols. New York, 1925. (A standard scholarly work.)

Mencken, H. L., *The American Language,* New York, 4th ed. 1936; supplementary volumes, 1945 and 1948. (One of the most informative and entertaining of all linguistic works.)

IV. Lapses. For those who wish to study speech blunders in greater detail than this paper permits, Sturtevant's treatment, "History" bibliography, Section I, will prove very helpful. The following article may serve as a model of the lapse studies which the teacher and his class may conduct:

Simonini, R. C., Jr., "Phonemic and Analogic Lapses in Radio and Television Speech," *American Speech,* XXXI (1956), 252–63.

V. More Dictionaries. An ever-increasing supply of special dictionaries is at hand to supplement the OED, the DAE and the DA. In the present article, I have made use of the following, all of which are of value and interest:

Berrey, Lester V., and Melvin van den Bark, *The American Thesaurus of Slang,* New York, 1942. (Enables the user to survey contemporary developments in individual areas of activity.)

Partridge, Eric, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English,* New York, 1937. (British slang together with "naturalized" Americanisms. Partridge has compiled a number of other useful lexicographical works which repay consultation.)

Skeat, Walter W., *An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language,* Oxford, 1910. (An old standby which is still of service.)

Waldorn, Arthur, *Concise Dictionary of the American Language,* New York, 1956. (An inexpensive little volume containing considerable lore.)

Wentworth, Harold, *American Dialect Dictionary,* New York, 1944. (The definitive work in this field has not yet been compiled; Wentworth, however, has gathered together a remarkable body

of useful dialect material; particularly helpful in the study of regional catch-ons.)

VI. General. Advanced high school students as well as their teachers will find the following very interesting reading:

Hixon, Jerome C., and I. Colodny, *Word Ways,* New York, 1946. (Contains brief, helpful discussions of semantic and other varieties of linguistic change.)

Huppé, Bernard F., and Jack Kaminsky, *Logic and Language,* New York, 1956. (The linguistic discussion in this little book is stimulating and informative; there are also some exercises.)

Postscript

I shall be delighted to hear from any teacher who essays historical study in his classroom. Any suggestions, criticisms or descriptions of fresh exercises will be warmly welcomed. Further, I shall be pleased to assist in the solving of any knotty problems which may arise in the execution of a given project; often, of course, I may be compelled to plead ignorance, but I shall look forward to hearing from those who are as puzzled—and intrigued—by the English language as I frequently am.